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The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

W. Norman Pittenger:

Death

Lee C. Moorehead • Bland Leading the Bland

Paul L. McKay • At the Edge of Mystery

James M. Howard • Life and Immortality

Kenneth Henderson • Good Friday, Then and Now

Robert M. Herhold • Joe Smith Goes to Church

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WILLIAM E. HULME • THE LORD'S TABLE

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The Pulpit

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PULPIT POST

The Head and the Heart

SIR: I appreciated the sermon by James Gregory (February) on the race problem where he took the basis for his message from the Golden Rule text. This I feel is a great treatment of the subject without becoming emotionally involved to the point where one's thinking is blurred.

This lifts the problem to a Christian level and can be applied to any minority group in our country.

I hope this message can have a wide coverage. If a series of thoughts is being compiled on the race question by any publishing house, I think this should be included in the list.

It is good Christian thinking.

CHARLES GRAYBEAL
Grandview Christian Church
Grandview, Washington

SIR: Neither lay people nor pa
are interested in intellectual diss
tions which do not touch the h
These, pastors can get from their b
on theology, philosophy, psych
and all the rest. Sometimes the
mons of the most famous name
preaching are the worst offenders
doubt they were moving when
sented orally, but in manuscript
become aloof and uninteresting. T
one man's opinion, and I still
enough stimulation from your p
cation to desire a year's collection
I do think the average pastor c
get a great deal more if the prese
tions were simpler and closer to
central business of winning peop
the Way.

R. D. PITTENG
Spearfish Methodist Church
Spearfish, South Dakota

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

LUME XXIX | APRIL 1958 | No. 4

Memo:

Y FATHER, Alexander Gill, died this week in California on the day after his sixty-first thday. I have just come from his funeral and close company of my mother, my five brothers d sisters and their beautiful children. It is hard, here in Chicago, to think past them and the event.

There we all were, remembering Alec, y, Grampy. None of us remembered the same y, or even with the same name. Each mind armed with its own memories. Each of us was ved differently in the dark mysteries of his ths. But all of us did and do remember because s was a memorable man. And all of us were and moved because this was a much-loved man.

We are not much used to funerals in our family d so we do not know how typical our experience those shadowed days was. The time between the turday of my father's dying and the Tuesday of burying was a hard time, but it wasn't a dreary ne. There were moments of terrible poignancy, t no gloom. And though there may be more ulti- te reasons for the joy we had even in that sad nion, I am sure that the immediate reason was the character of the man we mourned.

He knew that seriousness could involve tears d laughter, anger and glee, but never sour solem- y. No one who knew him could ever confuse the ly serious with the merely solemn. And he knew at there was a difference between honest senti- nt and bogus sentimentality. And the difference s precisely between the high spirit of sentiment d the prominently limp edges of sentimentality.

So we grieve, but not in gloom. So we remember, t without reluctance and without regret.

Any other way of remembrance is better than gret. That is why, as so many other families fore us have done, we covenanted at the funeral build whole lives that will reflect our beloved st. We told each other that he will be remem- red best wherever we broaden and deepen our servations and open them all to humor; whenever develop whatever skill or talent we may have til it has a life of its own, a quiet competence at finds its own unerring way; wherever informa- n comes edged in excitement and reactions are t to blaze!

But he will be remembered best of all wherever r love for each other is steadiest and warmest. he loss of a father in some primal way probably shakes us far below the level of felt reverberations. It is a reminder of the period that punctuates us all —or at least, of the peremptory comma. In sight of that, we can yield to panic and then subsist in desolation. Or we can accept the poignancy and then live in new tenderness and affection. For me and mine, though, there is no choice. We shall nourish now among ourselves the love we have had from him who nurtured us.

So far I have written only of my father and his family. If we were less sure of the love of God, that might have been put first. But Christians are those who know only this about the outermost context of existence: that it is neither material nor ethereal but personal, that it affirms men, that the realest real is in our favor, that God is love. All that is, even on a funeral day, is enveloped in all that has been and will be. And the enveloping reality is *for* us, sustains us, saves us—sustains us with the knowledge that he surely saves what was so good in what was given us to love awhile.

We squabble and we rant about all the picayune details we assign to mysteries completely beyond our assessing, when all we really have to tell the world, all we really have to live on is the good news that God is love. He has made and he will carry. Underneath are the everlasting arms. He who could create us in the first place can recreate us in the last, and we shall wait in that confidence. Faith in such love is our whole hope.

But now, the love of God that gets us through hard days is for more than funerals. It is for living along. When you know in your bones that the most real knows you and loves you, that beyond the vicissitudes of experience and the catastrophies of existence the ground of all being has declared itself for you, there should be a relief and a release in your living, a new inventiveness and zest in your living, a new pleasure, a more confident participation in life and its precious fascinations. In my family's invention and in our joy certain memories that from now on will always be on top, will be our goads and our guides.

God was good to us in the man through whom he gave us life, by whom he sustained us in the years of our helplessness, into whose hands he gave our earthly keeping. Now we ask the God who gave him life to sustain us still in the years of our helplessness, and we praise that God who has him in His keeping.

T. A. G.

The Mortality Rate Remains At One Hundred Per Cent

Death

By W. Norman Pittenger

THE "old saw" has it that only two things are certain: death and taxes. Nobody nowadays would question the reality of taxes, but it is a strange fact of our times that very few of us are prepared to face up to the reality of death. And yet we know that each one of us will, within a shorter or longer time, be a corpse. As a New York surgeon said to a group of seminary students to whom he was lecturing on the progress of medical science, "Do not forget, gentlemen, that with all this advance, the mortality rate remains at one hundred per cent."

Frequently we hear the blame for our modern American attitude towards death put on the shoulders of the "morticians" or undertakers. It is much more likely that it works the other way round: Undertakers are simply reflecting, in their practice of so preparing a body for burial that death is made as "inoffensive" as possible, the prevalent American unwillingness to reckon with the stark reality. This is all the more surprising when we remember how many men and women have been killed in recent years through war and its results. Any clergyman who is called upon to assist a bereaved family will probably testify that one reason why the death of one of their number comes as such a terrible shock is that they have never included death in their scheme of life. Hence they are not prepared for it when it comes upon them, especially when it comes suddenly.

Misunderstanding

Whether we like it or not, death is a fact; and it is a fact with which the Christian church has always reckoned. Yet even here there is often misunderstanding. Many Christian people, and unhappily many Christian ministers too, have thought that the Christian way of reckoning with death is to deny its reality by emphasizing "immortality" or the future life in such a way that death itself becomes a mere incident with little significance.

W. NORMAN PITTENGER, *professor of Christian Apologetics at General Theological Seminary, New York, has been on the teaching staff there since his ordination as an Episcopalian minister in 1936. He has served on various commissions in the ecumenical movement and is a frequent lecturer at American universities and colleges. He is well-known as an author and contributor to periodicals.*

An old friend of mine used to tell of a pastor w custom was, when visiting a home immedia after a death, to enter the house and say, lo and clearly, "There is no death." "This w damnable lie," said my friend, "for the body often still in the house."

No, the Christian attitude towards death nei minimizes its importance nor denies its rea The Christian attitude is, first, an honest reco tion of the fact with no attempt to extenuat terrible actuality, and second, a faith which through death to the God who can and does m death his servant. Let us explore these two st ments.

We begin with an honest recognition of the Now, the fact of death means the finality of That is to say, death puts an end to this mo existence. We have just so much time to liv mortal men in this world of space and time. A years added to this period, thanks to the altoge desirable and commendable advance of med science, cannot change the plain truth that no can live, as a mortal in this world, forever and e We may ridicule our ancestors who often said they wished to "prepare for death," but it rem true that every man or woman who honestly s to look the facts straight in the face ought to clude in his thinking about his own mortal ex ence the *finis* which death puts to that existe Seeing this to be so, he ought to live as one wh going to die.

Death Means Finality

By that affirmation we do not mean anyth unnecessarily morbid. It would be silly to ex people to spend all their time brooding on t future death. There is too much to do in the w for that to be a practical or healthy possibility. what is possible and what is, above all, Christia to have as a kind of *leit-motif* running through of one's activities the honest recognition of mortality.

Not only would this mean that we should ready to see that "you can't take it with you and so we should be a little less concerned to all our treasure in this world—but also it wo mean that we should understand our own "expe ability" in the working out of God's purposes, thereby be delivered from that subtle kind of p which makes us think that "everything depends us." This need not result in moral irresponsibili "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." the contrary, it can make our attitude towards own mortal existence genuinely Christian, in t like our Lord Jesus Christ we can gladly freely commend ourselves and our work to creator, knowing that if we do so commend o selves and our work we can trust with an invinci Christian hope that God will use whatever we or do for his own good ends. Thus we are sa from "faithless fears and worldly anxieties."

The German existentialist philosopher, Heid ger, has taken as one of the ground-truths of philosophy this recognition of the fact of our man mortality. For there is a positive as well a

gative side to death. If death is on the one hand e finality of life, it is on the other life in its ality. As those who are going to die, we can live th a certain zest and vividness, since "we shall t pass this way again." Thus every experience, ery relationship, every piece of work, can have at kind of interest and give us that kind of joy ich comes when we know that this is something e have but for a time and hence have both satisction *and* detachment towards it. "The world sseth away, and the desires thereof"—hence we n go through life as pilgrims, wayfaring men, owing that pilgrims have a certain tang in life d work which is denied to those who are too well ttled in the land.

Natural Immortality

But as we have said, the Christian attitude to ath not only includes this honest facing of the ct, with its results in recognition of our mortality d the consequent zest which attaches to our istence here. It also includes a faith which sees rough death to God who is lord of death. That is hy Christian thinking has centered, not in some pposedly "natural immortality," but in belief in resurrection from the dead."

"Natural immortality" may or may not be demonstrable; but even if it were, the mere assurance f some prolongation of existence as it is, or the otion of some future life of disembodied "soul," or e idea of absorption in a spirit-realm, would ardly equal the joyous assurance of the Christian ith in "resurrection from the dead." Of course e belief in resurrection has been made difficult for any by a mistaken idea that it means that *this* hysical body, with its chemicals, will be reconituted. It is a tragedy that the rich reality has een confused with chemistry and physics. The hristian hope is far different: "God giveth it a ody as it pleaseth him," St. Paul tells us. And the body of the resurrection" is not a physical body; is, as St. Paul goes on to say, a "spiritual body."

Life Recreated

All this is a highly symbolic way of saying that eyond and through death, God who created life in he first instance and continues to create it in every stance, can also recreate life out of death; he an take our embodied personalities—and that is hat our personalities in fact always are—and remake them after the image of his Son, whose death nd resurrection are therefore types of our own. Christ the first fruits . . ."—but we, after his pattern and in the power of his resurrection, are given y God the perfect fruition of our personality as of ur work in the "spiritual body," in continuity ith this present material body, which God will reate afresh out of the wreck of our mortal xistence.

The Christian view of man's existence is not dependent upon the deliverances of philosophy, any more than it is dependent upon the discoveries of cience. It is based upon faith in God himself, hich includes the fact—also known through faith —that as God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, so also shall he quicken us. That is to say, the Christian has what the *Book of Common Prayer* calls a "religious hope," not a philosophical surmise or a scientific demonstration. "Flesh and blood," St. Paul told us, "cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven" but God can and does use all that we are and do, in our flesh and blood, to give us a new life—a new life in Christ.

All Is Under God

This suggests another aspect of the Christian hope. For if the Christian faith be such as we have said, then the very fact of our mortality is seen in a different light. For those who have committed themselves to God in Christ, life is even now "in Christ." We already have our "stake" in the heavenly kingdom. So we can recognize our place of pilgrimage for what it is—a *via* or way to our true *patria* or native land. We are indeed "strangers and pilgrims"; but we have a fatherland, in the vision of whose glory we live and work. And our task, like that of all true colonists, is to conform this world of our sojourning to the vision of the fatherland. Which is to say that we are called upon as Christians to make the charity and righteousness of God prevail in this mortal world, never resting until they have spread to the remotest corner. It is of course true that this world cannot contain the fulness of God's kingdom; yet we must also affirm that it can manifest ever more and more of that kingdom. Thus our Christian task is both to live as those who must die, in the steady confidence that God will take care of us, and also to work as those who have been given a divine commission to make all things fair, even now.

But in the end we must confess that it is not really we who do this. All is under God and from God, save our sin and selfishness and pride. "Every virtue we possess, and every victory won . . . are his alone." Yet this does not mean that we are robots, without freedom. On the contrary, our freedom consists precisely in the service of God, "whose service *is* perfect freedom." The man who thinks that he can do what he wants, as he wants it, is "bound and tied by the chains of his sin." The man who commits himself to God is released from that bondage; in God's will, as Dante said, is his peace. And for the first time, he becomes *himself*, as God means man to be; he knows "the perfect liberty of the children of God."

Liberty

Liberty—that is what God has promised in Christ; and that means that we are *liberated*, freed, by knowledge of the facts and ability to meet them in high faith. The Christian man is delivered from the fear that death is the absolute end of his existence; he is also freed from the illusion that death does not have about it a final quality so far as *mortal* existence is concerned. But above all he is liberated into a certain and religious hope that God "has prepared for them that love him such good things as pass man's understanding." That is freedom indeed. As God's man in Christ, he is a free

(Continued on page 13)

The Sacrament Communicates
A True and Holy Oneness

THE LORD'S TABLE

AFTER centuries of being a divisive influence in Christendom, there is now hope on the horizon that the Lord's Supper is coming into its role as the great uniter. The encouraging report of the section considering this sacrament at the Oberlin Conference on Faith and Order is the immediate cause of such hope. But as the conference report itself testifies, its success was due in part to the fact that there has been a return of all the churches to a deeper concern for the Lord's Table. I do not say this smugly as a Lutheran—since Lutherans have supposedly been always concerned about the sacrament—for the historic practice of infrequent Communion among my denomination in this country shows how little we understood or appreciated its meaning. Rather our cause for rejoicing is that the Lord's Table was instituted as a uniter. It is the *communion*—the union with. Its purpose is to unite the church as the family of God by uniting it with its sources in truth. Could it be that in our deeper concern for the Lord's Supper we are growing more together because we are growing more into the truth of the gospel?

Union with the Spirit

There are four great unions that are communicated in the Lord's Table. The first of these is that the Lord's Table unites us with the Spirit. It is union with Christ. This is the mystical element in religion. It is also the deepest meaning of the gospel. The good news is that union with God is a free gift to all who desire it—not at some future event but *now*. It is this union that is communicated to us in the sacrament. Jesus took bread and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." He took the cup and said, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." The elements are taken orally—taken within. It is communion in the depths, his spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.

The divine-human encounter is central to all genuinely religious activity. But the church has always had a problem over it. On the one hand desire it, even long for it, panting as the hart the waterbrook. On the other hand we may fear God can be too much for us. And so the need is reduce him to something harmless. We try to c cumscribe the infinite within a set of theologic ethical, or even psychological propositions. B when we do so we take the vitality out of religi for there is no Spirit.

It is this *living center* that is preserved for us the Lord's Supper. Far from being opposed to t formulation of intellectual propositions, this uni with the Spirit is the dynamic for all living th ology. As Douglas Steere has pointed out, "Tru great Christian theology, while it is only one ma festation of devotion, and is never to be confus with devotion as such, has always sprung from watershed of devotion." So also for our systems ethics and our ethical action. It is out of our livi experience with the living God that we are mov to work and to pray that his kingdom shall co and his will be done on earth.

The great challenge to the Church is not on that we recognize the reality of such a union, b that we realize it. It is more than a practicing the presence; it is a sense of union with the eterna Such a realization brings forth joy and thanksg ing. In the words of the Communion hymn:

> Break forth, my soul, for joy, and say
> What wealth is come to me this day!
> My Savior dwells within me now:
> How blest am I! how good art Thou!

Small wonder that already in the *Didache* of 1 A.D. the Lord's Table is called the *Eucharist*—t thanksgiving.

Union with the Historical

As fundamental to religion as it is, the mysti experience in religion can become so involved in t existential moment of the inner life that it becom dissociated from the world of time and space. T danger is that the historical roots of the Christi faith may lose any real significance. This is a pro lem because Christianity is a historical religion. has its origin in a series of events that center in t life and work of Jesus Christ. As interpreted faith God entered into time in the person of Chr to effect mankind's redemption from sin and ev

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By William E. Hulme

—GREAT UNITER

What is needed is a balance between these historical events and the mystical expression of redemption in terms of union with God. We find this balance in the Lord's Supper which unites us both with the Spirit and with the historical.

The Lord's Table is a prophetic and commemorative proclaiming of the atoning death and resurrection of Christ. With its setting in the Old Testament Passover, it is a perpetuation of the Hebrew way of preserving the past in the present through religious observance. Through such a medium the past becomes present without ceasing to be past. Nor is the present joined only to the past. St. Paul says that as often as we celebrate the sacrament we "proclaim the Lord's death till he come." Jesus himself said that he would not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when he would drink it new in the kingdom of God. The Lord's Supper points to the fulfillment of the Christian faith in terms of the fulfillment of history. One of the concerns of the Oberlin conference was that "we shall see in the Eucharist primarily what God in Christ is doing for our redemption, as we look back in faith to what he has done and forward in hope to what he shall do."

Balance Needed

This union with the historical preserves religion from being lost in subjectivity. While the church needs to listen to Kirkegaard that *subjectivity is truth*, we can get to the point where subjectivity is so all-inclusive that it has no correspondence to the world outside the self. When this is the case it is questionable whether "subjectivity is truth" has not lost all meaning. We find the needed balance in objectivity in the historical anchor and future hope of the Christian faith, which is communicated uniquely in the Lord's Table. The body and blood of Christ—the historical means for atonement—are, as it were, received into us. Separation is removed. There is a reassurance of oneness. We are judged and forgiven in the experience of reception. In this way objectivity becomes subjective without ceasing to be objective.

In the sacrament we receive the heavenly through the earthly. Jesus took bread and said, "Take, eat, this is my body." In a sense the sacrament is a continuation of the incarnation. The unseen and intangible needs the help of the seen and the tangible to be meaningful to human beings. So the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten son of God. So also bread and wine bring to us the body and blood. Again it is the intangible of God conveyed by the tangible of creation. Luther used this comparison of the incarnation with the Lord's Table to repudiate the doctrine of transubstantiation. Since no transubstantiation was necessary to receive the divine through the human in the incarnation, he pointed out, so none is required for the reception of the divine through the human in the sacrament. The heavenly is united with the earthly, the spiritual with the physical.

Union with the Natural

The church has consistently had its misgivings over any union with the natural. Instead it has tended to separate the physical from the spiritual, as one would chaff from the wheat. This is the most prolonged and unchallenged heresy in the church. We are still having trouble as "spiritual people" in accepting and coming to terms with our physical existence. In the name of union with the Spirit or union with the historical, we tend to despise the very context in which the Word became manifest. This is due in part to the large influence of neo-Platonic concepts on Christian thought. The old Greek idea that the spirit contains the good in man, while his body is the locale of his evil, continues to characterize not only Roman Catholicism, but Eastern Orthodoxy and Protestantism as well. This entrenchment of Greek thought was and still is aided by a licentious culture with which the church has continually had to contend. Like the pendulum swing, we seem unable to stop at the center in our attempt to correct abuse, and instead go to the opposite extreme. The result is that creation itself becomes suspect. We assume that it is wrong to enjoy what some people abuse. Enjoyment itself is dubious.

All of this is a denial of the doctrine of creation —that everything created by God is good if the *spirit* is right, if it is received with thanksgiving. This is the truth of the incarnation preserved to us in the Lord's Table. It brings redemption into creation, into the world, into the life of society. Even

as he receives the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine, so the Christian in a sense sees through the earthly to the heavenly in all of life. In the material he receives the spiritual. In daily bread—the creation—we see God the creator, who for us is also the redeemer. The created thing brings about the divine human encounter. In receiving it there is the religious experience of thanksgiving. So we acknowledge him, we receive him, in all our ways.

Union with Community

The Lord's Table unites us with our neighbor. "Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf." The communion is two-way—with God and with man; or perhaps better, a single communion that includes God and man. The Spirit comes through the sacrament, but never in isolation, for the sacrament necessitates the communion of saints. Reconciliation overcomes separation here also. The same body and blood that unites us to God unites us to our fellowman. Our response to the *gift* that we receive is to offer ourselves. It is here that Calvin sees the strongest incentive to live the Christian life. As the fellowship partakes of the sacrifice of love that binds it together, the members themselves are drawn to each other by the rise of the same sacrificial love within themselves. So the Lord's Table strengthens us for life in community. The church is called the redemptive community because it is the community of the reconciled, and as such, is redemptive in society.

We find in this union with community a wholesome corrective to individualistic tendencies that crop up again and again in religious activity. For both the mystic and the theologian there is the danger that works of charity are considered as necessary distractions from the first love, which is meditation or conceptual speculation. What goes on between "God and myself" may make the church as a *fellowship of believers* almost peripheral to the religious life. The enjoyment of the mental exercise or the mystical communion tends to crowd out intercession for others.

God and Our Neighbor

The sacramental union with community shows us that union with God is not something extraneous to but part and parcel with social living. This realization helps to alleviate the familiar frustration that the religious life creates in our age. There is a conflict between the fast pace and the devotional life. But need there be if union with God includes also union with my neighbor? The devotional life is not *essentially* different from life in community, for it is in the church—the fellowship of believers—that the Spirit operates. We are one body—the body of Christ.

This brings us to the current distinction between an I-Thou and an I-it relationship. If my neighbor is a distraction from my spiritual preoccupation, then he is an it. But if he is within my spiritual preoccupation, he is a Thou—one in whom I see Christ. He is a subject rather than an object, one from whom I can learn, one through whom I ceive the Spirit. Here is the help we need in res ing spirituality to our fast pace and to our fan living. Social experience is holy experience. W this is so, intercession for others is not only cen in the devotional life, but spontaneous rather t dutiful. It is this oneness with the family of C that is communicated to us in the sacrament. "T glory which Thou hast given me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are on in them and thou in me, that they may bec perfectly one, so that the world may know t thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as t hast loved me."

Prayers

O DIVINE PATIENCE, who dost not br the bruised reed nor quench the smok flax, look with graciousness upon us as we cruc but earnestly stumble up the steps of prayer. thank thee, that perfect as thou art, thou dost reject our imperfect petitions. Behind the awkw phrases and the inconstant thoughts thou perc est the lonely outreach of seeking souls who w to learn to seek more acceptably. Grant us this the spiritual blessings for which we inadequa ask. Greaten our souls to receive the gifts which thy graciousness will overflow the narrow bou of our pleading. Amen.

• • •

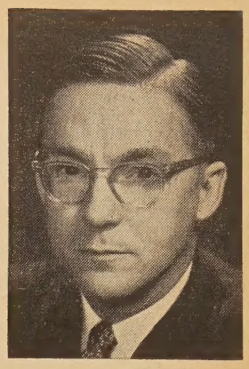
O GOD, who art known both in the stern p sure of fact and in the gentle persuasion the ideal, we, thy children, are torn between grossness of what we are and the fineness of w we long to be. We are of the earth, earthy; in are the ravening animal, the ruthless savage the timid child. Desire and habit have their v with us.

Yet, we thank thee, our Father, that there i spark that disturbs our clod. There is in each o some slight trace of thine image. May it incre

We thank thee for Jesus in whose commit life we have seen thy will lived divinely in a hun situation. From him may we learn to live, without struggle, but free from the inner con which weakens our efforts. Under his guidance n we find release from the evil that soils our cond In his spirit may we seek that excellence wh thou desirest, and achieve the maturity of Ch tian discipleship.

May this triumph of faith within our lives s tain our confidence in the integrity and ultim triumph of thy purpose. So we continue to p and to toil in the trust that to this world, haun by fear and tense with suspicion, thou wilt br the peace that passes all understanding and brotherhood that has no bounds. Amen.—*Ha Leonard Bowman, pastor emeritus, First Pres terian Church, Chicago, Illinois.*

o We Want Illusions that Soothe
r Truth that Hurts—and Heals



The Bland Leading the Bland

By Lee C. Moorehead

NE week a bright young student stopped me in front of the church bulletin board to call y attention to what appeared to her to be a mis- ke in the announcement of the sermon topic. She ought that "bland" should be "blind." But I id news for her. The words were spelled correctly: The Bland Leading the Bland."

It is not original. I discovered this phrase re- ntly in an article by the outstanding Harvard storian, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. In defining what eralism meant to him he had this to say:

> Its essential preoccupation remains the individual; and liberalism sees as the greatest need in America—and as the condition precedent to much else—the revival of individual spontaneity . . . The greatest threat to American liberty today comes not from outer coercion but from inner weakness . . . The greater danger is . . . less from the people who do not want others to be free than from the people who do not want to be free themselves, who feel themselves rendered guilty by deviation and threatened by dissent, whose whole aspiration is to merge their identity with the group.
>
> What liberalism must resist is the tendency to turn America into one great and genuinely benevolent company town—*the bland leading the bland.* It must oppose the drift into the homogenized society. It must fight spiritual unemployment, as it once fought economic unemployment.[1]

hat phrase—"The Bland Leading the Bland"— stled my mind. We may not all realize what the ord "bland" implies. It means: gentle or agree- ble; soothing or balmy, as air; nonirritating; non- timulating; soft; mild. Schlesinger says that we arry gentleness and agreeableness to an extreme. Ve have become the nonirritating and the non- timulating leading the nonirritating and the non- timulating. We have a sense of panic when we tand out from the group. We are desperately afraid f our own individuality, our own distinctiveness. eing sweet and gentle and agreeable is not invariably virtuous. There has developed, therefore, a kind of outer coercion, compelling all of us to be wholly agreeable and nonirritating. No matter what happens to us, we agree to the tyranny of the group.

Somewhere recently I heard the same situation described in this story. Two cows were standing in a cow pasture. A milk truck passed. On the truck was a sign which read:

> Fresh milk
> Standardized
> Pasteurized
> Homogenized
> Grade A
> Vitamins added

One cow said after it had passed, "Makes you feel inadequate, doesn't it?" That is the way the submerged individual feels these days as he finds himself sinking still deeper into the standardized, pasteurized, homogenized mass.

It is time, I believe, that Christians make a critical appraisal of what is happening to them. For this trend has surely affected Christians and church people as much as anyone else. The Bible has a great deal to say about homogenized and standardized society. It is in fact the history of a people who were forever submitting to the tyrannies of conformity. Much of their history could be told in the phrase, "The bland leading the bland." Yet the mighty prophets of Israel—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Jesus—were sent by God periodically to shake the people from their languor and lethargy, to stab them with the truths of their individual responsibility before God. Such was the thrust of the first Isaiah who saw his people languishing in the Babylonian captivity. There they had adjusted and adapted themselves to the pagan ways of their captors.

> For they are a rebellious people,
> lying sons,
> sons who will not hear
> the instructions of the Lord;
> who say to the seers, "See not";
> and to the prophets, "Prophesy not
> to us what is right;
> speak to us smooth things,
> prophesy illusions,
> leave the way, turn aside from the path,
> let us hear no more of the
> Holy One of Israel."

[1] *Saturday Review of Literature,* June 8, 1957. Used by permission.

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Those who wanted "smooth things" spoken and illusions prophesied were the bland who wanted to be led by the bland. Indeed, "the bland leading the bland" implies a condition of sightlessness which is as serious as "the blind leading the blind."

Christian people ought not to be blind to truth and reality. Neither ought they always be bland, that is agreeable, nonirritating, nonstimulating. Let us look into this situation and face some of our deeper needs as Christians.

I

For one thing we ought to recognize that the truth is unpleasant to hear. Sometimes there is just no way of making the truth palatable and inviting. It is for this reason that we like to be led by the bland who are always agreeable, soothing, nonirritating, nonstimulating. Yet Christians are not so weak that they demand more sugar than medicine in their pills. They can face up to harsh truths.

The great late Archbishop William Temple once employed these words to describe a condition like this which frequently prevails in the church:

> In the church, after Freud hit it,
> Said a vicar, "There's no use to quit it.
> We can't be adjusted
> So don't be disgusted,
> Just baptize your neurosis and forget it."

Neurotic people always have difficulty in accepting the raw facts of reality. But there are so many of us like that that it has almost become fashionable to baptize our weaknesses with the holy water of conformity. Hence the bland lead the bland. It is not really popular to face and accept reality.

There is clear evidence that in the present time we have wanted our politicians, for example, to tell us that we can have our cake and eat it too. We expect them to show us how we can have thicker carpets, better cars, richer food, and peace and security at the same time. We want them to assure us they can make our world safe to live in while cutting our taxes. And so—to gain election—they have been telling us what we want to hear. But Sputnik seems to have shattered our illusion of safety while roughing up our smooth talk. Now we know the truth and it is hurting.

Let me share with you an observation which steadily grows out of my experience as a pastoral counselor. A good many people come to me in a state of deep distress, many whom I have never seen before. They recognize the extremity of their circumstances and in desperation seek someone to talk to. That's what a minister is for. But I observe that many of them quickly withdraw from the counseling relationship as soon as the truth becomes clear and they are faced with the necessity of making an intelligent decision in the light of reality. I get many cancellations of appointments. At the point of greatest insight and the necessity of drastic action they disappear. They want me to lead them not to the recognition of a hard truth, but into a bland and blissful illusion.

Possibly there are people who come to church hoping that the minister will preach blandly, soothingly, nonirritatingly, nonstimulatingly. Perha they say to the preacher, "Speak to us smoo things, prophesy illusions." I am convinced th there are those who stay away from church reg larly because they cannot face up to reality.

We should never forget that the handbook our faith, the Bible, is a book of disturbing trut which were spoken to several different generatio which found them extremely unpleasant and u palatable. All of the great men of the Bible Moses, Amos, Isaiah, Hosea, Ezekiel, Jeremia Jesus and Paul spoke unpleasant truths. Inde from the standpoint of the bland who wanted be led by the bland, the Bible is an exceptional unpleasant book.

II

In the second place we ought to consider o need for a kind of healthy skepticism with rega to every pressure we are placed under and eve brand of goods for which we are being given t pitch. Yes, Christians ought to have some stro doubts about the patterns of society which d holy robes.

Most of us are too much like putty: we perm ourselves to be pressed and pounded into eve mold. We seldom let out a squeak of disapprov We go along with every gag which is popular played. Perhaps we are somewhat like a new ki of breakfast food about which I heard the oth day. This particular dish advertises that it is "gua anteed not to snap, not to crackle, and not to po it just promises to lie at the bottom of its bowl a absorb its milk." Too many of us just absorb t atmosphere around us. We need to criticize t atmosphere!

Since much of the world's work now is bei done by committees we are also like the committe member who, paraphrasing Caesar, confessed, came, I saw, I concurred." We don't ask question we just concur. The bland lead us. We don't like stir up trouble. We resemble Pat who was dyin The minister called to see him. The minister sai "Pat, you have been a sinful, worldly man, a apparently have only a little while to live. Ca you accept God and renounce the devil and all h works?" To which Pat weakly replied: "Sure, accept God all right, but I don't want to antag nize anybody." Even in death the bland lead t bland.

In fact there are now even blander controls po sible for leading the bland. All of the pain is bei taken out of such influence through a new devi developed by the Subliminal Projection Compa of Manhattan. This company has perfected a pl for throwing unseen messages on movie and te vision screens in 1/3000th-of-a-second flashes. TH device was tested in a New Jersey theater whe the audience was subjected to guinea pig tes without knowing it. Certain messages were flash on the screen. The audience did not even kno that they had seen these messages but as a result them they purchased 18% more Coca Cola a 57% more popcorn. This is a completely nonir tating and agreeable way of getting you to act

.e ways other people want you to act. But some-here along the line, if we are going to remain .iman, we have got to develop a healthy skepti-sm about what manipulators are doing to us.

I read recently an article called "How To Tell our Friends from Geniuses," written by Ernest ones, M.D. It was a study of the qualities of true enius. This he observed about geniuses: "It has ng struck me that an essential prerequisite of ich productivity must lie in a particular skepti-sm on the part of the genius. He must have re-used to acquiesce in certain previously accepted onclusions. This argues a kind of imperviousness o the opinions of others, notably of authorities."[2] Most of us are not geniuses, but we would do well o adopt this trait in order to keep from being led y the bland.

Christopher Morley once recommended that we Read every day something no one else is reading. Think something no one else is thinking. It is bad or the mind to be always a part of unanimity." Everyone of us ought to be developing some tech-nique, some tendency to criticize and judge our neighborhood, our political party, our club, our newspapers, radio, TV, yes, even our church. For if we do not we will be the bland led by the bland. A real Christian is stoutly skeptical of those who Speak to us smooth things, [who] prophesy illusions."

III

The last and most important thing Christians ought to realize is that it takes real courage to stand up and be oneself. The real Christian is one who refuses to be standardized and homogenized. He will not be led by the bland. Indeed, blessed are those who are irritated by conformity! The Christian will not be led by the bland because he senses deep within his soul that God intended him to be an individual with individual integrity and worth.

Frederick Meek has pointed out that in the processes of evolution the animals that developed the spinal column and the backbone, the verte-brates, were the animals that were the noncon-formists. The other creatures remained as jelly fish or else they turned into clams. The only way for one to become a real person under God is to develop a spinal column and a backbone that will enable him to stand up and be counted as a person.

Edna St. Vincent Millay pictures the conformist as a stockbroker being addressed thus by a com-munist:

> You, an individual?—you, you regimented mouse?
> Your Harvard Club, Union Club, white tie for the opera, black tie for the theatre,
> Trouser legs a little wider this year, sir . . .
> Pumps are no longer worn, sir,
> Mah-Johnng, cross-word, anagram, backgammon, whist, bridge, auction, contract, regimented mouse!
> Why, you're so accustomed to being flanked to right and left by people just like yourself
> That if they ever *should* step aside you couldn't stand up.[3]

Now, honestly, how many of us could stand up if our conformity to the flanks right and left of us were withdrawn?

The great historian of American history, Bruce Catton, has written, in assessing our history, that "Freedom rests on courage; and courage, in its turn, rests on faith—on faith in ourselves and faith in our fellows, on faith that the thing which we be-lieve in and which we live by is immortal and ever-lasting, a fundamental truth of the universe with which we move on toward the future. It is on this faith that our confidence finally rests."[4] America was not made great—it cannot be made great—by the bland leading the bland.

A recent novel, *The Last Angry Man*, tells about an old doctor who had spent his professional career in a slum area in Brooklyn. He was a very excellent medical man but he was considered a failure by his friends and colleagues because he was first and last an individualist who refused to con-form. In the end he suffers a heart attack and dies. One of the characters in the novel, musing over the meaning of his life, sums him up in this way:

"I loved him . . . All of him—those rages and screwy notions about people, and being so com-pletely out of step he was left behind. Yet it's a damn strange thing. I never knew anyone who had a keener idea of what it was all about . . . He didn't go to the bargain counters. You couldn't convince him otherwise . . . There aren't enough people left who get mad, plain mad at all the bitchery and fraud. We take fraud for granted. We accept it. We like it. We want to be had. That's where he was different. He knew he was being cheated and he didn't like it one tiny bit, whether it was some old biddy doing him out of his two dollars worth or a corporation telling him they made better cathar-tics. He was the last angry man."[5]

I think the great Negro minister and leader, Martin Luther King, has pointed the way to true selfhood. "I still believe," he said, "that standing up for the truth of God is the greatest thing in the world. This is the end of life. The end of life is not to be happy. The end of life is not to achieve pleasure and avoid pain. The end of life is to do the will of God, come what may."

Let us not be the bland being led by the bland. Let us be truly angry men, if necessary—angry against fraud, standardization, homogenization. Let our Lord be he who said, not, "Blessed are the bland," but, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Let us remember that it was also he who said, "Blessed are those who are per-secuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And never forget what the great Apostle Paul said, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Let us discover and practice our own true selfhood. Let us seek our integrity in God. And in the name of Christ let us be not bland but bold!

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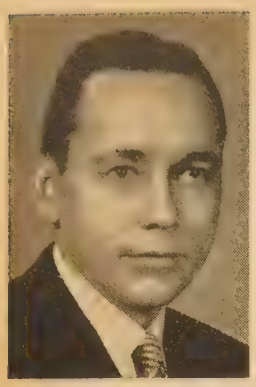
[2] *Saturday Review of Literature*, August 10, 1957. Used by permission.

[3] From *Conversation At Midnight*, Harper & Brothers, Copyright 1937 by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Used by permission.

[4] *Saturday Review of Literature*, July 6, 1957. Used by permission.

[5] Gerald Green, *The Last Angry Man*, p. 489 (New York: Charles Scrib-ner's Sons, 1956). Used by permission.



At the Edge of Mystery

By Paul L. McKay

THE noted physicist, J. Robert Oppenheimer once said, "We guess in the night and then correct our guesses by day . . . We live at the edge of mystery."[1] These are words we need to remember especially on Easter morning. As we approach the open tomb we sense that we stand at the edge of mystery.

All of life involves mystery. Life is a venture from the unknown into the unknown. One cannot reflect deeply on life's meaning without being caught up in a surge of mystery and awe. Matthew Arnold spoke for many of us when he wrote:

> But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
> But often, in the din of strife,
> There rises an unspeakable desire
> After the knowledge of our buried life;
> A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
> In tracking out our true, original course;
> A longing to inquire
> Into the mystery of this heart which beats
> So wild, so deep in us—to know
> Whence our lives come and where they go.

Plato said, "Wonder is the feeling of a philosopher and philosophy begins in wonder." We live in a world of mystery. No monotony of everyday sameness should be permitted to dull the keen edge of awe and mystery. Who can explain why a tulip has a heat of four and one half degrees above the atmosphere? Why the song of the lark is always pitched precisely in the same key? Why bees make their combs hexagonal? Who can explain the unerring instinct of the homing pigeon or tell why the salmon returns to the place of his spawning to die? The answers to the questions are veiled in mystery. Nonetheless we accept them as facts of life. Long ago John Donne reflected:

> Why grass is green, or why our blood is red
> Are mysteries which none can reach unto.

Bishop Butler was fond of saying, "The constitution of the world and God's natural government of it, is all mystery." Kant wrote of two things which filled him with awe: the starry skies above and the moral law within.

Man looks in two directions and feels the sense of mystery in the universe. In *A Journey into Faith*, Dr. Thomas S. Kepler tells about the medical student who said, "I was an atheist until one day I looked at a specimen of life under the m croscope." An astronomer observed, "When I lo at the starry heavens, millions of light-years awa I am filled with a sense of mystery; especially wh I realize that man is the astronomer who h fathomed these unlimited distances." In a deep religious mood William Blake saw wonder and my tery in all things:

> To see the World in a Grain of Sand
> And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
> Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
> And Eternity in an hour.

There is not only mystery in life but there is al mystery in religion. Apart from mystery religi would cease to be. All the ancient religions h their exoteric and esoteric aspects. There were t mysteries of Isis and the mysteries of Eleus which were revealed in the depths of the forest in subterranean chambers amid mystic rites a ceremonies and under inviolable oaths. "Happy the man," sings Pindar, "who beholds the myster below the resounding earth."

When a new Hall of Philosophy was being erect at Harvard consideration was given to the mot to be placed over the door. The faculty of philos phy proposed the proud statement of the anci Greeks, "Man is the measure of all things." Pre dent Eliot vetoed the suggestion and had the words carved above the doorway:

> What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
> And the son of man, that thou visitest him?

The eighth Psalm, from which these words com is a hymn of awe and adoration magnifying Go glory which is shrouded in mystery.

When Jesus was asked by his disciples why I spoke in parables he replied: "Unto you it is give to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: b unto them which are without, all these things a done in parables." Paul's writings breath the air mystery; not some esoteric or hidden human wi dom but the mystery of God revealed throu Jesus Christ. To the church at Corinth he sai

[1] *The New Yorker*, January 15, 1955. Used by permission.

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'e speak the wisdom of God in a mystery . . . ich God ordained before the world unto our ry." In his great resurrection chapter in First rinthians Paul said, "Behold, I show you a mys- y." Paul knew in terms inexpressible that as he d with Christ he stood at the edge of mystery!

Never more than on Easter morning do we walk awe and expectation. The events of Holy Week fold life's drama. The good had been denied; alties had wavered; justice had been scorned; rkness covered the earth; a tragic and helpless ure on the cross had asked, "Why?" Now—on ster morning—these questions were not an- ered as men give answers. They were gloriously olved in a new mystery! Easter dawning gave e to the faith that the good had triumphed; gher loyalties were revealed to which life must be nmitted; justice was disclosed as a continued ry to be read in the perspective of eternity; light spelled darkness.

The Tug of the Eternal

When more than today do we feel within us the g of the eternal? In the holy hush of the resurrec- n we experience intimations that transcend time d space. The fragments of our little lives seem evocably linked with a larger destiny. With ante Gabriel Rossetti ("The Sea-limits") we

> Gather a shell from the strewn beach
> And listen at its lips: they sing
> The same desire and mystery,
> The echo of the whole sea's speech.

ne throb and heartbeat of the eternal surge thin us as we stand in Joseph's garden by the le of an open tomb. With our hearts attuned "to at which cannot be, but was" there comes (as pressed in John Greenleaf Whittier's "The eeting")

> The feeling which is evidence
> That very near around us lies
> The realm of spiritual mysteries;
> The sphere of the supernal powers
> Impinges on this world of ours.

Thomas Hardy once described how in the twi- ght of a dreary winter afternoon he heard a thrush n a branch above his head suddenly breaking into static song. Everything around was so depressing, nd there seemed to be little visible cause for such yful carolling. Hardy expressed the thought that ne thrush possessed "Some blessed hope of which e knew, And I was unaware." The mystery of the surrection became the disciples' blessed hope hich released a power in their lives they had never nown before. This blessed hope turned hopeless- ess into rejoicing; faith replaced fear. "Blessed be ne God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, hich according to his abundant mercy hath be- otten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection f Jesus Christ from the dead."

Rudolf Otto has written of the "tremendous ystery" of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He minds us that "To speak of 'resurrection' is to tter a mystery, and mystery is a subject for faith, ot science." No person should ever be asked to surrender his reason. I do not ask that of you. Put your reason to its highest and noblest task. Albert Einstein once said, "The most beautiful thing we can express is the mysterious."

> 'Tis not the lack of links within the chain,
> From cause to cause, but that the chain exists,
> That's the unfathomable mystery.[2]

Do not let the wonderful meaning of Easter seep away through the warped beams of human knowledge. The very fact of resurrection in the face of despair and disillusionment is itself a mystery. The open tomb is filled with a mystery and meaning that transcends all human understanding. Ultimate reality is never grasped by human hands. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing" (Proverbs 25:2). Man's arms are too short to take hold of the ultimate. Life's great realities become meaningful when they are embraced by faith and transformed by love. The late George Santayana said,

> Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
> That lights our pathway but one step ahead,
> Across a void of mystery and dread.[3]

The Easter faith gives light to our path. It leads us to the edge of mystery but assures us there is nothing to dread in the mystery. When the ultimate mystery is unveiled we will find an eternal love that forms a bridge across man's fears into a realm of joy and life and peace.

Death

(Continued from page 5)

man in this world and in the world to come, bound only to God and to the love of God, from which nothing can separate him—not even death itself.

One wishes that our clergy would emphasize these Christian convictions and that they would persuade their people to have done with the silliness, sentimentality, and stupidity of American "mortuary customs." Indeed one might say that a major apologetic task in this land and in this day is to do on a large scale what Evelyn Waugh did for the sophisticated some years ago in his novel *The Loved One.* We can sum it up in a sentence: One of the indispensable conditions for a real understanding of Christianity is a recognition of the stark fact of human death, coupled with a vigorous reaffirmation of the Christian faith that our Lord "by his death has destroyed death, and by his resurrection has restored unto us everlasting life."

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[2]Alfred Noyes, "Watchers in the Sky," *Collected Poems in One Volume,* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1922). Used by permission.

[3]From *The Philosophy of Santayana,* edited by Irwin Edman (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953). Used by permission.

The New Testament Hope
And the Survival of the Individual

Life and Immortality

By James Merriam Howard

God . . . called us with a holy calling . . . through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. II Timothy 1:8-10.

ONE chilly September morning on the Massachusetts coast a group of old friends were sitting before an open fire. The conversation turned to religion, and someone suggested that each member of the group speak out his real thoughts about what, if anything, lies beyond this earthly life. The discussion which followed brought out a great variety of ideas. They ranged all the way from enthusiastic anticipation on the part of one man to utter disregard of the whole subject by another. Although all save that last one were church members, some in the group were more, some less, positive about their faith, while several declared themselves satisfied that they would become extinct when their bodies died. One or two looked for a kind of immortality in which whatever was good in them might be passed on into the lives of those who should come after them.

If any Sunday morning congregation might break up into small groups in which each person would freely speak of his real belief, I wonder what sort of picture we would have of what the average Christian looks forward to. Or doesn't the average Christian look that far ahead?

The other day I talked with a friend who had recently attended the twenty-fifth anniversary reunion of his class in college. He said the chief thing on every man's mind seemed to be establishing security for himself and his family. That is natural. We all want to be independent as age comes on; and before that we want to give our sons and daughters an education, and to provide for our loved ones in the event of our death. But there must be times when even those who are busiest with business affairs think about what lies beyond business, beyond old age, beyond the sickness and death which we know must overtake us all. And not only us, but our loved ones ("ay, there's rub!").

We didn't argue about immortality on that S tember morning, and I do not intend to ar about it now. But I do want to say a few thi about the Christian belief in immortality and grounds on which it rests.

Assuaging Human Grief

First, the Christian hope includes the survival the individual person. I recall a memorial ser held in the chapel of a great university some ye ago. After the names of those who had died been read, and appropriate prayers had been fered and glorious hymns had been sung, featured address was made by a professor of in national law. Speaking, as he said, for the comm man, he declared, "I do not believe that we assu human griefs or promote one another's happin or erect and pursue ethical standards because our belief in immortality." After touching on sc ideas like that suggested a moment ago—the mortality of the influence we leave behind—t speaker said that the only immortality in wh the common man is interested is the survival of individual soul; and on this, he was inclined to lieve it best for thinking people to remain in dou

Well, there is no doubt about the witness of New Testament! And it is on the New Testam that the Christian rests his faith, is it not?

Philosophy and Religion

Of course there have been in every age philo phers who have reasoned their way to belief immortality. From Socrates and Plato right do to some of the keenest minds of our own day, th have been men who have thought their way throu the arguments pro and con, and have reache positive conclusion that apart from such belief t present life has no meaning. Though they m agree with Immanuel Kant that pure reason c not furnish logical proof of either God or imm tality, they find with him that practical rea demands that they assume these truths in order have a universe which makes sense.

But most people are not philosophers. Not ma of us are capable of thinking our way through intellectual puzzles which such men spend th

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e patiently putting together. What gives us the rance we need is not philosophy, not logic, but h.

Recently I reread an article written some years by Arthur Holley Compton, entitled "Mor- ty and Immortality of Living Organisms." In it distinguished physicist discussed various as- ts of physical science which give support to the a that the death of the body need not mean the inction of mind or consciousness. But at the end the essay he turned to religion: "Speaking now, as a scientist but as man to man, how can a her who loves his children choose to have them ? As long as there is in heaven a God of love, re must be for God's children everlasting life."[1] A God of love! That rests right back on the New stament. For in the New Testament, as nowhere e in all literature, we find not a discussion of the stence of such a God but a continual affirmation t the all-loving Father is personally concerned h and active in the lives of men. "For God so ed the world that he gave his only begotten Son, at whosoever believeth in him should not perish t have everlasting life."

A New Kind of Life

That means the survival of the individual per- ; but more than that, it means the individual's trance into a new kind of life the blessings of hich he shares with all others who, as the Scrip- re says, by faith inherit the promises. For it is t just a prolonged existence which awaits us. hat is why the word "everlasting" is an unsatis- ctory translation in the verse just quoted. What meant is a life in which time has no meaning. For ne is a matter of days and years; and what are ese but ways of measuring the revolutions of the rth on its axis and its circling around the sun? ot everlasting, but "eternal" is the word for it. n eternal life, and a deathless life; that is, a life e from corruption and decay and disintegration d all that we mean by death. Those two ideas are ught up in the two Greek words translated "im- ortality" in the New Testament.

Moreover, it is a life of growth which is promised : spiritual and moral—and let us hope, intellec- al—growth. Beginning not when we died, but re and now as soon as we launch out on a life of ith, and continuing through death into the world eyond, we are to "grow up in every way into him ho is the head, into Christ," until we "attain . . . mature manhood, to the measure of the stature the fullness of Christ." It would take unmeas- rable time for me, I know, to reach such a goal, nd therefore I am content to include the thought f an everlasting life; but the emphasis is on the ntinuing growth of my moral and spiritual capac- ies into the likeness of my Lord.

And that is the prospect for all of us who, as ohn says, have passed from death into life. There a sense in which the Christian life we live here nd now and the larger life into which it opens the ay is an intensely individual matter. Each of us must make his own choice, his own decision, his own venture of faith, his own commitment to Christ. Each must be judged on the basis of his own faith and on the way in which he translates it into his daily life.

Yet the very essence of the Christian life is what the New Testament Christians called a communion, a sharing, a partnership. They had this in their churches. How it gladdened the heart of the Apostle Paul when he found it among them. He knew they needed each other's faith and love. And when they split into factions, as they sometimes did, he rated their selfishness, their dissension, their party spirit, along with immorality, licentiousness, drunkenness, and according to some ancient manuscripts, even murder. Paul wanted them knit together in love, helping together, working together; such phrases occur over and again. We proclaim a basic Christian truth when we sing:

> Blest be the tie that binds
> Our hearts in Christian love.
> The fellowship of kindred minds
> Is like to that above.

For the life which the New Testament envisions is one in which the least and the greatest are all sons and daughters of God together, "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ."

That last phrase gives the controlling concept of Christian immortality: it is a life with Christ. When Paul from a Roman prison wrote his letter to the Philippians he had had many months in which to think. The outcome for him might be execution, or he might be released to return to his work and to the friends whom he loved. If he had his choice, he asked himself, which would it be? And his answer: "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain. If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better."

The Controlling Concept

A new and different life, then—so the New Testament assures us—a timeless life; a deathless life; a life of continuing growth in moral and spiritual perception and power; a life of comradeship with an ever-widening company of worth-while friends in Christ; a life in which we shall come to know him, and to be, at long last, "like him," John says, "for we shall see Him as He is."

So what? Does it make any difference whether we have such a hope, or whether, like the professor quoted a few moments ago, we hold that "we do not assuage human griefs, or promote one another's happiness or erect and pursue ethical standards . . . because of our belief in immortality"?

Some of my warmest friends would go along with the latter view. One, who not long ago faced death in a sudden illness, said, "It didn't trouble me in the least that this might mean my complete extinction." Another, who has been through many serious illnesses and is now in his seventy-ninth year, wrote recently: "There are many idealists among those who do not accept belief in immortality.

[1] From a pamphlet *Life After Death* (American Institute of Sacred Literature, 1930).

Probably more men have faced martyrdom for what they did not believe than for what they did. Integrity stands high among the virtues in my book; and the acceptance of things as one believes them to me has something of the spirit of him who said, 'Though he slay me yet will I trust him.' "

There are many sincere followers of Jesus, I am sure, who would be content to have on their tombstones the verse which is on that of Thomas Huxley:

> Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep;
> For still he giveth his beloved sleep;
> And if an endless sleep he wills, so best.

But as one who has been dealing with bereaved families for forty-odd years, I assure you that belief in Christian immortality does bring comfort when loved ones die. There may be stoical men and women who could stand by the casket of a beloved child or friend and say, "Well, that's the end for him, and I am content to have it so." But they would want a service held; and what scripture would they want the minister to read? Logically one might read from the Book of Ecclesiastes: "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth the beasts . . . as the one dieth, so dieth the other; . . . all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man, whether it goeth upward?"

Changing the Face of the World

But no! What bereaved people want to hear is, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want . . . Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. . . . Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." They want to hear the voice of Jesus saying, "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions." Ah, I have seen such comforting words from Scripture change the face of the world for a groping and grief-stricken man!

No power in immortality to assuage human grief? A friend whose twelve-year-old son had been killed in an accident wrote me: "I am grateful to God with all my heart that even as I stood by Bill's body in the hospital I had the instant conviction that he had just gone home and that all was well with him. . . . It has come to me since that that life must be a life of growth, and that Bill is finding there the warmth and richness that you and I find in our friendship with each other."

As for ethical standards and high ideals and integrity of life, of course we do find them among men of no religious faith at all. More often than they realize these have come to them by inheritance, by absorption, from the accumulated faith of the families, the churches, the civilization in which they have lived. An individual (as Fosdick so aptly puts it) may be a "pensioner on the accumulated faith of the race even when he himself denies the faith."

Movement for human welfare springs from the Christian church. And back of this lies the conviction that every man is potentially a son of G that his personal development and moral chara are of eternal value, and that what each chooses and achieves here carries over into the beyond. If that were not so, why should men la to save the physically unfit, the mentally subn mal, the morally depraved? If physical death is end, why not hasten it? Why not rid these un tunates of the burden of life and society of burden of their support?

Plain Teaching

Gamaliel Bradford, writing of Dwight Moody's prodigious labors to convert sinners, s "One gets so irritated sometimes over the u absence of the things that seem to some of us count, that one is tempted to ask of what use i to save a soul when there is nothing in it wo saving."[2] Bradford, who was a sort of wistful nostic about the Christian faith, just had grasped the profound conviction which Mo shared with Christ's true apostles in every age, t by the grace and power of God the worst and vi of men may inherit and become fit for everlast life.

That is the plain teaching of the New Testame isn't it? And if it is not true, then Jesus Christ the most deluded man who ever walked the ea For he not only believed and taught that there life infinitely worth-while awaiting the children God, but he willingly went to meet death in most agonizing form, by crucifixion, in order make that life available for every man.

Dip into the four Gospels most anywhere a see this for yourself. Start, if you will, with sermon on the mount, in the fifth chapter Matthew: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the is the kingdom of heaven." Read right on throu all that Matthew tells of the Master's teachi until you come, in the twenty-fifth chapter, to parable of the last judgment. There the king s to those on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for y from the foundation of the world." And the Jesus declares, shall go into eternal life.

Immortality Assumed

You will find that personal immortality is sumed in almost every sentence Jesus uttered. I whole view of life, of God, of man, depends on t conviction that this life here is but a beginning training, an opportunity for making choices wh have eternal consequences, and that beyond it l another life in which what we choose, and what do, and what we become here finds ultimate p sonal fulfillment. That belief cannot be dissociat from the teaching of Jesus. It is woven into t background of all that he said and of every act his life.

Read again, in any of the Gospels, the story his passion. Follow him from the upper roo

[2]Gamaliel Bradford, *D. L. Moody—A Worker In Souls* (New Yo George H. Doran Company, 1927). Used by permission.

(Continued on page 19)

Turning Back We only Begin
ur Reckoning with the Cross

Good Friday, Then and Now

By Kenneth Henderson

OOD Friday is the day we look at the cross of Calvary in order that we may see the cross of 1958. For many of us, in the foreground of our minds, it is the spring of the year 29 A.D. We gaze at the center cross of three crosses on a distant hill. Jesus' disciples, frightened of that most terrifying thing, the cruelty of an inflamed crowd, watch from a distance. But the centuries have pushed back that crowd from us, and from the men with the tasselled robes who egged them on and asked sarcastic questions of the dying man. We are free to walk across those centuries and go near without apparent danger. And so some of us go, thinking that here is the opportunity that must be taken even if we flinch, to gaze on the material circumstances of the torture of the Son of Man, so that these may cut through the padding of our imaginations *into* our imaginations, and help us to realize what Christ did—and is doing for us. Stand close to that cross by all means and watch the blood dry and the greyness come, and listen to the words as they fall: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" as they crucified; "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise" to the dying thief; "Woman behold thy son, son behold thy mother" to the mother standing at the foot of the cross; "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"—the cry that binds him to every man who has failed to do what he believed God told him to do; "I thirst"—and the sponge goes up on the reed with the rough wine; "It is finished"; and as the head falls forward, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

So we render the emotional tribute that is our due, and we silently applaud ourselves for so doing, and think of all the people who do not. Let heaven forbid that we should deprecate that emotional tribute. Many great resolves have grown out of it. But as we turn back to 1958, we find that we have only begun our reckoning with the cross.

To understand this cross of 1958 and what it asks us to do in this present world needs some clear thinking. It will help us to see clearly if we go back to 29 A.D. this time to look at the cross of Jesus as a historical worldly event with a historical worldly cause. Far more than that, you say. Yes, but at *least* that, and if we can understand that historical setting of the cross, it will help us to hear what God is asking in 1958.

Historically the cross was an attempt to deliver the Jewish people then, and the world today, from the dominion of selfish pressure groups and false ideas by setting to work in men the kingdom of God.

Nothing About Hating

In one sense the cross of Christ was a drama of olden time. The moving events were enclosed in the fact that the Jewish homeland had become, by irresistible force, an outlying subprovince of the Roman Empire with a reputation for reckless fanatical rebellions. Those long-robed betasselled men, the Pharisees, had played a rather heroic part in the spiritual resistance to the Roman Empire. Other nations had settled down after submission, started to speak the koiné or conversational Greek of the Middle East, added the Roman gods to their own and found themselves not badly off. But in tiny Judaea the Pharisees had started rabbinic schools in every village and educated the people in the greatness of their literature. They produced some great teachers. They tightened up the law so there was no doubt as to the Jewish way of life. Hope and hate are powerful to unite people, and they had united the people in hope of the promised Messiah, the conquering messenger of God. In hope and hate they had united the people.

Jesus came repudiating their authority and preached a kingdom of God which was not a bit like that. There was, for instance, nothing about hating Romans. He took all that was best in the Jewish heritage and set it free. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy brains (for heart means brains in the Bible), thy soul, thy strength and thy neighbor as thyself. Two Old Testament quotations

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are fused into one. Love was greater than the law and fulfilled it. Those shattering Beatitudes—Blessed are they who open themselves to God's love—were destructive of the common view that success was God's blessing. Then the whisper spread that Jesus claimed to be the promised Messiah, and Jesus gave countenance to it by entering Jerusalem on an ass, the sign of peaceful entry as a war horse would have been the sign of war. The Pharisaic system was dedicated to hold out, to hate and to hope, and the system was threatened. It was expedient that one man should die for the people.

The Sadducees had less substance. They believed in the books of Moses and rejected the Pharisees' additions to the law. They were skeptics. This cult of modified scepticism was popular among Jews with overseas contacts. But they had the priesthood and the rich revenues of the temple run by people who probably had their doubts as to the value of human sacrifice but made a good thing out of it. If this fanatic Jesus of Nazareth succeeded, no more temple trade.

And then there was the Roman governor. Peace was the policy of the Empire. He had had one rebuke already for letting things get out of hand but he had a sense of the dignity of Roman law and justice. It seems that there was respect in his "ecce homo"—"behold the man." But there were the makings of a murderous riot in the street below; this kingdom business whatever it meant might get dangerous—and, of course, there could be no king but Caesar. The governor must have smiled grimly to hear the mob shouting that, even if they only said it to give him no leg to stand on. "No king but Caesar"—and so to Calvary.

That was a long time ago, but is it all over now? In these 1929 years the Galilean has had some success—patchy but real—mixed into us all. Governors, men of integrity, go to church now and call themselves his followers. There is no penalty for going to church except the muted sniffs of those who want to do something else.

Stern and Creative

But across the centuries come the words that make Christianity stern and keep it creative. "He that comes after me, let him take up his cross and follow me." The cross was heavy and it dragged. It was rough and splintery. "Yes," you say, "but there's nothing to worry about now. It's only a figure of speech. They don't crucify a man for being a Christian today."

Not literally. The more real Christianity there is in our society, the less a man loses by following Christ. But try to push people a bit further along the Christian road than they want to go. Try making people who feel pretty good and worthy of their own approval—try making them see that they have made a false bottom to their lives. Try making people who feel secure of their righteousness before God and man—try making them feel insecure and in need of starting again. Do that and do it well, knowing what you are doing. Some will join you in thankfulness. Most will want to put you down—not by shouts this time, but by whispers. "Fanatic," "off balance," "fellow traveler," "bosses' man"—not nails or stones but words that tear through your reputation, leaving great wounds in it and breaking your credit with your fellow man, making you helpless to present the truth as you see it. Even if without saying a word you make the crowd feel unsure of themselves, they will vindicate themselves by making you uncomfortable. You may lose promotion, miss your chance of serving on a committee in a cause you love—all by witnessing for Christ even if you hardly know his name.

In Australia today, the servant of Christ who has the hardest time is the peacemaker; and he is the people's greatest need, for we are becoming a bitterly divided people. The work of the community is done by people grouped in a series of interlocking skills. There are doctors, graziers, managers, engine-drivers, miners, ironworkers, seamen, dairymen, and the like. Each skill is highly organized for its own interests, each is and forever will be necessary to the others. So far this is natural.

Anger Is the Dynamic

But there is lacking an overruling sense of responsibility to the community. Each is continually claiming more from the total income. Each can enforce its demands either by capturing the authority of the state to enforce them, or by withholding its services from the network of skills, so that to refuse its demands is more costly than to grant them. Though arbitration lessens the damage, we live in a world in which group selfishness becomes more effective in a destructive way. Anger is the modern dynamic, and nothing succeeds like the combination of hate and hope. No change in the social order can do away with the clash of interests between men doing different jobs while selfishness rules.

Fanatical rightists or leftists dream of the day when their own groups shall reign supreme and hold all others in subjection; 1984 is not the solution. To sit on the heads of one's enemies is the best that one can hope to do in the present mores setup, and that is a precarious, exhausting, uneconomic, and spiritually destructive attitude. Problems such as inflation and housing require half a dozen major groups to work together, and they will not.

Concrete Aims

What can the Christian church do? Nothing obviously—unless it is heeded. It can teach the fundamental relations between God and man and men and men as hard social realism calling on them to love one another in the sense of respecting each other, having consideration and understanding and helpfulness for one another. On another level it can translate that teaching into concrete aims for the time: international well-being, international peace, better nutrition for peoples who lack it, better clothing, housing, health, education, recreation, for we worship a Father who desires for us all that a loving father can desire for his children.

All this could matter infinitely to the people

hose minds are locked in inside their fighting oups. But who is to tell it to them in such a way to sound convincing? Parsons? No, they are too off. Only someone *within* the group can talk at se range? Where shall we find such people? Well, u and I and everyone else have been born into a essure group. We cannot, as Christians, take fuge in our own insignificance. The issue is vital. he future of the world," it has been truly said, epends on the behavior of individuals within eir groups."

Ending a Feud

This is the form that the cross takes today. A w start for peace can come only out of individuals ho have thought out what they can say to their oups. It must be practical and for now. "Pie in e sky" won't do. It must be a line of action keeping in view what is just and fair for the group as r the community. It must take a longer view than he more for you the less for me" of the present gfight. It must use and allow for mixed motives -"How shall there be more good things to distribute?" is a religious question. But it must be sponsible to the community, working with others other functions with respect, sympathy and elpfulness—as the New Testament calls it, love.

The hardest thing that the Christian can tell his roup is that the only way to end a feud is by one ide doing the decent thing first, and going on doing it until the enmity of the other side is broken own. Ideals pay when they are established, but he people who start to establish them get hurt, ot physically always, though that sometimes happens. But if you try to make people realize that heir lives and motives are not all they could be, hey will resent it. They will feel uncomfortable nd take it out on you. That is as sure today as it vas in 29 A.D.

Hard to Shake Limitations

And let not the Christian feel overconfident of is own motives. He is born in a class, a group. It s hard to shake off those limitations even when we incerely want to. To love at long range, to care for hose who have no care for you—there stands then he cross today, where men meet together for work. It stands in board room and office, in factory, wharf and ship, in graziers' associations and farmers' unions and engineering workshops. The deliverance of life from its bitterness and insecurity depends on those who can take up that cross with all the strength of their minds and compassion for their brethren. They will get hurt, and they probably will not do much visible good at first.

But the cross they lift in workmanlike fashion will go on doing its work. Whatever shapes and forms society may take, the cross-bearers must be in it. And as they gather others to their burden, they—dare we say *we*?—shall be for one another and for the world within our range a most practical Christian people. For we discover the creative truth that in standing close to Good Friday *then*, we stand close to life *now*.

Life and Immortality

(Continued from page 16)

through Gethsemane and Pilate's judgment hall, to Calvary. See there his helpless body, bruised and beaten, nailed now to a cross, and hear his cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" See him bow his head and breathe out the last spark of life with the prayer, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit."

Was that the end of Jesus Christ? Was that "wreckt carcase" all that was left of him who said, "I am the resurrection and the life; whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"?

A Living Presence

You know it was not! There was a resurrection: there had to be! Jesus Christ is not the dead hero of a lost cause, who died in the preposterous belief that he would live again. To Peter and John and the others who went through the world telling his truth Jesus was a living presence, with them always, as he had promised. And to countless men and women down through the ages he has been, as he is to millions today, a living Lord and an ever-present Savior and friend, whom to know is life eternal.

Prove it? No. The Christian faith, as the great Apostle said, does not depend on the wisdom of this world. George Santayana had discovered that when, after a long career of teaching philosophy, he wrote:

> O world, thou choosest not the better part!
> It is not wisdom to be only wise,
> And on the inward vision close the eyes,
> But is is wisdom to believe the heart.
> Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
> Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;
> To trust the soul's invincible surmise
> Was all his science and his only art.
> Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
> That lights the pathway but one step ahead
> Across a void of mystery and dread.
> Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
> By which alone the mortal heart is led
> Unto the thinking of the thought divine.[3]

Whether the author of that sonnet ever achieved a wholly Christian philosophy I am not sure. But this I know, and with confidence I declare it now to you: The tender light of faith begins to shine with assuring radiance, and faith's invincible surmise becomes a certainty to those who earnestly live by the teaching and humbly follow in the company of Jesus Christ. For all such, he abolished death and still brings life and immortality to light through the gospel.

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[3]From *The Philosophy of Santayana*, edited by Irwin Edman (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953). Used by permission.

Joe Smith Goes to Church on Easter

By Robert M. Herhold

THREE women picked their way along a rocky path in the early dawn. The sun was beginning to appear in the eastern sky as one of them spoke: "You know, I still think it's pretty risky coming here this morning. The chief priests and elders will stop at nothing to destroy us all. Suppose some of them are hiding by the tomb and come out and accuse us of trying to steal his body."

"If they do, we'll just have to try and persuade them that we've only come to anoint him for burial," sighed the older woman with the very tired face.

"But who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" asked the youngest woman.

. . .

The alarm clock went off and Joe Smith pulled the pillow tightly around his ears. This was the same futile gesture that Joe went through every morning. He struck out blindly with his arm and sent the clock crashing to the floor where it continued to ring under the bed. He leaned over and groped around aimlessly until he found it and pushed in the alarm button.

Joe tried to go back to sleep but he couldn't with the cat scratching at the back door. He got up, looked for his slippers, finally put on his old shoes without the laces, and stumbled toward the door. The cat scooted in and Joe picked up the *Tribune* from the porch. He walked into the living room, found one cigarette left in a crumpled pack, and settled down to read what happened to the Sox.

"Before you go getting too comfortable, remember this is Easter and we're going to church together." Joe slunk down in his chair as he listened to the voice of doom. "I'm sick and tired of making excuses for you all year long, Joe Smith! You can go to church with me at least one Sunday out of the year!"

Reluctantly Joe shaved, dressed, gulped a cup of coffee, and pulled the car out of the garage.

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Despite some very obvious differences, the th women on the way to the tomb and Joe Smith ha a lot in common. Neither the women nor Joe pected anything unusual to happen on Easter. T women were wrong. Something startling did ha pen. The stone was rolled away and a young m told them Christ had risen.

But let's get back to Joe. What, if anything, d happen when he makes his annual pilgrimage church?

He sees the church filled one Sunday out of t year; notices some people with new clothes; he some good music and listens to a minister speak the meaning of Easter. Joe's heard it before, b he makes this annual check to see if they're s talking about the same thing.

Indigestion from Living

Yet, Joe never quite knows what the minis means by "eternal life" or "immortality." It sounds pretty vague and up in the clouds to hi Maybe it's all right for some guy who's about to d but Joe is forty-five and he's not thinking abo dying for some time.

Besides, what does all this business about ev lasting life really mean? If its just more of the sa old humdrum he's known on earth, Joe isn't t sure he's interested. Sometimes he feels like t fellow whose girl is trying to impress him with h domestic skills. She cooks a none too palatab meal for boy friend; then as he sits back in l chair wishing he could ask for some baking so she puts her arm around him and purrs softly his ear: "Darling, just think, when we're marrie can cook all of your meals, forever!" The truth Joe has indigestion from living and isn't so su he's up to carrying on the act for millions and m lions of years more.

What should be said to Joe on Easter Sunda The first thing that needs to be said is that th life upon earth has meaning; that the present l he lives—in spite of frustration, sorrow, disappoi ment, suffering, and pain—is significant and wort while.

Joe may be an arch welder, a mail carrier, or clothing salesman; but he needs to know that h reason for being on earth is to praise and serve Go This is Joe's chief vocation and he carries it out he repairs bumpers, delivers letters, or sells a spri

Joe needs to hear very plainly that life is
l and that it has purpose and meaning. He
lls to know that life is meaningful because God
e to us as a carpenter, preacher, and teacher.
oe's trouble is not that he drinks too much, or
he beats his wife, or that he runs around with
r women, but that he has never thought of his
as belonging to God. He has never felt that
had any particular claim on him. He always
that he was responsible only to himself and
e around him who depended upon him. He al-
s dismissed this kind of talk by a shrugging of
shoulders and saying: "I guess I'm just not the
gious type."

A Built-in Need

But being a Christian is not like being a born
dlete or having a knack for playing the drums.
s not the peculiar gift of a few. It is that des-
and goal toward which God calls Joe and
y man.
We have a built-in need for God and life will al-
s be meaningless until we find our meaning in
. We have been made in the very image of God
we bear his coat of arms upon our souls. We
not escape him—he will follow us through life.
will both drive us down to the depths of despair
lift us up to the heights of glory. He is God,
t finally we can only cry out with St. Augustine:
hou madest us for thyself, O Lord, and our
rts are restless until they find their rest in
e!"
Besides hearing that life has purpose and mean-
, Joe needs to know that death also has mean-
. Joe really hasn't thought about death much.
did a little in the army, but that was different.
thinks about it now and then in connection
h Alice and the kids. When he thinks too much
ng this line, he's usually a push-over for the
t life insurance salesman that comes to the door.
Every few months Joe has to go to a funeral.
ery year it seems like there are more of them to
to. First it was his father, then his mother, and
w recently his older brother. Besides these, there
s the guy next door who didn't survive the oper-
on and the fellow at work who dropped over
m a heart attack as he was about to get a drink
the water cooler.

Why Not Joy?

Joe went to their funerals. Sometimes as he sat
ere and listened to the preacher read the words
Jesus, "Because I live ye shall live also," he
uldn't help but wonder if people really believed
is. The service would end with the stirring words:
death, where is thy victory? O death, where is
y sting? . . . Thanks be to God, who gives us the
tory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
Joe would be the last to say he was much of a
urch member, but why, if these words are true,
the funeral end the way it did? Instead of leav-
in the confident truth of these words, everyone
me up for another look and broke down again. If
ey really believed, why not leave with the note
joy and triumph?

"Maybe deep down we're all really afraid of death," Joe often thought. It's O.K. to be philosophic about death, provided it's someone else's death we're talking about. And someone else who's not too near us, someone we don't have to depend upon for comfort and love and companionship.

Death can often be a gentle night visitor, one for whom the welcome mat is in place. Death can be a really kind friend, a comforting companion. But death can also be a rude, uninvited guest. He sometimes barges in and breaks up the party when we least want him. Death can be like the stern father who calls his children into the house just as the game outside is getting good. Death can also be like the strict parent, watch in hand, who calls the young lovers from their farewell embrace at the front door.

Whether death is welcomed or not, Easter has something decisive to say about it. On Good Friday God himself entered the darkness of death and the tomb. On Easter God broke the chains of death and the tomb. For God is like the wise father who understands the child's fear of the darkness. Instead of jesting or dismissing the child's fear, the parent goes into the dark room, remains for a few moments and then comes out saying: "See, there is really nothing to be afraid of. Come, take my hand and we'll go in together." Easter says to Joe and to you and to me that there is a meaning to life and a meaning to death. This meaning is to be found in Jesus Christ who entered into both life and death for us.

One Thing More

But one more thing Joe should know. This meaning comes hard. There is no sale price on finding a purpose for life and for death. Joe really knows and respects this. In fact, he's been secretly offended when the preacher made the life everlasting sound like a reward for attending church once a year.

The gate is narrow but it is not impossible to find. The life everlasting is to be found only in Christian community. God may have granted you some special dispensation, some special visa I know nothing about. But so far as I know as a Christian pastor, it is my duty to warn you that Christ gives meaning to life and to death only through his living church.

Deep down in his heart Joe knows this too. All his talk about being just as good a Christian by playing golf or fishing on Sunday morning is so much baloney and Joe knows it. He even wishes sometimes the preacher would tell him that to his face.

Joe knows enough about baseball to know how unworkable is the notion that one can play baseball without joining a team. Just a free-lance player who would drop in at any ballpark he pleased and expect to be put in the lineup—Joe would be the first to tell him he was crazy; if he really wants to play, he had better take the game seriously.

The church of Jesus Christ asks people to commit themselves. To Joe and any other free-lance people the church declares that the way to find the

reason for living and the reason for dying is through the church.

Perhaps like the women who came to anoint Jesus, perhaps like Joe Smith, we have come to church on Easter morning not expecting anything unusual to happen. But where God is at work, anything is possible. God can break through to us with the awareness that life is good and death no longer a terror. When this happens, we go out to carry the burdens of life which, though just as heavy, no longer have the power to crush us. For by His life we find purpose and meaning in life, by his death we no longer fear to die, and by his resurrection we are led to the life everlasting.

If Easter Be Not True

By Richard B. Martin
Grace Episcopal Church
Norfolk, Virginia

If Easter be not true, then let all the winds of the earth sound a dirge for living things, prophesying their doom.

Let the tender buds of springtime wither upon the sap-filled tree, imprisoning the eager leaf, the latent flower and fruit that wills to be.

Let the farmer's seed lie dormant in the soil unresponsive to nature's wooing hand, of soft summer rain, and vitalizing sun.

If Easter be not true, then let the mind forget the beauty of a rose in bloom; a field of corn laden with fruitful yield, in answer to honest toil and simple faith.

Let snow and ice be not put to flight by springtime's waft of temperate heat, that the human heart might freeze and know not the risen life decreed to nature's order.

Let the song of birds be heard no more; the cricket's chorus on a country road, nor the bass of the frog in meadow symphony.

Let rains fall unabated in torrential wrath and lightening speed its fiery chariot to herald the end; as thunder peals in echoing the end of time, the end of all.

If Easter be not true, then let the heart be not constrained to love the friend who once was partner in life's ups and downs and with whom we shared a common heart.

If Easter be not true, then let faith and hope be stricken from this earthly plane that man might know the eternal hell from which he may not rise.

Let weeping mourners stand beside the ga grave of loved ones, and as the soil is thrown ceive no heavenly hope of what it means to and love and lose.

Let Scripture be mocked and God denied. endless night descend. But wait—be still awh This is God's world! Must the finite mind asc the throne of God and give command? Man n learn obedience and faith and then he will h and hearing learn; and learning, stand strong.

Now for question: "If a man die, shall he again?" Heaven answers: "I am the resurrec and the life: he that believeth in me, though were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever li and believeth in me, shall never die."

That voice is heard that shuts the gates of dc and hushes the cynic's reveling. Eternity spe to open graves and fills the void of broken hear

In faithful answer men stand still and tal life, made adequate through Christ, to the cyn claim, and life's defeat. No earthly foe can slay the soul that can believe and say: "I k that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall st at the latter day upon the earth: and though body be destroyed, yet shall I see God: whor shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall beh and not as a stranger."

Pastoral Prayer

FATHER of us all, forgive our feeble f which causes us to slink through life afraid apprehensive. Restore us once again to our bi right. We have sinned as did the Prodigal. have found no lasting satisfaction in our sin. are uneasy because of our wasted opportuniti We are cut off from the fellowship of thee and fellow men who are striving to do thy will.

But we are trying even now to make cont with thee again. May we have the joy of the Pr igal as he sees his father run in love toward h May we feel thy arms of love circling us and conscious of thy joy that we have turned to t again. As we confess our sin, knowing in our c minds the just punishments of slavery to sin wh is our due, please hush our speaking with words love. Call us thy children once again. Clothe us righteousness; put the sandals of purposive liv on our feet; put the ring of service on our fing restore us to sonship and love and the center joy and celebration.

We have been lost in self, in things of the wo in worry, in fear—but now we are found of th We have been dead to the divinity in our natu —thank thee, Father; we are alive again. Amen *Alvin D. Johnson, City Park Baptist Church, D ver, Colorado.*

...at Faith Is Hammered Out
... the Hard Anvil of Doubt

Faith Enough to Doubt

By Richard K. Curtis

... HISTORY repeats itself, the Church of Christ ...—now riding the crest of public approval—will ...e again sink inexorably into the trough of dis-...ute. Perhaps, even now, we are reaching the ...teau. If so, where will we be ten years hence? ...enty? What rationalization will we offer our ...d? Will we succumb to the age-old temptation of ...phasizing our denominational differences in an ...rt to blame our disfavor on some segment of ...ristendom other than our own? Given enough ...esty to look within, we stand a better than ...rage chance of discovering we have been long ... credulity and short on faith. Indeed, it appears ... have had so little faith, especially on the con-...vative end of the religious spectrum, that we ...e refused to doubt!

...t is unfortunate that we generally attach ugly ...notations to the word "doubt" when used in a ...igious context. For the same word, used in secu-... fields, is considered not only in good taste, but ...erly necessary for progress.

Consider politics, for example. In 1774 virtually ... only characteristic akin to all thirteen colonies ... s their subservience to the British. Scattered ...ng some 1500 miles of the eastern seaboard, ...th distances in terms of travel and communica-...n many times that separating Russia and the ...ited States today to say nothing of the barriers ... religion, race, color, and nationality emphasized ... an intense clannishness, it was tantamount to ...sanity to fly in the face of the status quo—but ...en Patrick Henry, speaking at the first Colonial ...ngress, and fully aware of the seeming in-...rmountables toward union, dared to doubt. ...Throughout the continent government is dissolved. ...ndmarks are dissolved. Where are now your ...undaries? The distinctions between Virginians, ...nnsylvanians, New Yorkers, New Englanders are ... more. I am not a Virginian, I am an American." ...id their differences, enormous as they loomed, ...nstantly have to shackle them into impotency ...fore the British Crown? Henry doubted. And as others doubted, and upon this doubt erected a working faith in independence, our nation was born.

Rethinking Necessary

Or again, consider the sciences. Where would our economic prosperity be today, had not men like Galileo, Copernicus, Newton, Einstein and others dared to doubt the well-established findings of their respective predecessors?

Perhaps, at this point, some would object that to doubt in other areas is one thing, but to doubt the religious faith of our fathers is something else again. Rather, the difficulty is not so much that we doubt the faith of our fathers, or at least the adequacy of the expression in which they conceived it, but, instead, that the faith of our fathers has never truly become ours.

Unfortunately, the faith our parents hand down to us is never quite ours, until we, like David of old with King Saul's armor, protest that we must first "prove it." Only then, after we have tried and tested it, doubting it, and then coming to doubt our doubts, only after we have wrestled with our faith as Jacob did with the angel, can we claim a faith sufficient to arm us for life's battles. Until we do, our faith is like a secondhand suit of clothes, hand-me-downs that may have fit others but never do quite fit us.

The experience of Leslie Stephens is most pertinent because so widespread. "My own experience is, I imagine, a common one. When I ceased to accept the teachings of my youth, it was not so much a process of giving up beliefs, as of discovering that I had never really believed. The contrast between the genuine convictions that guide and govern conduct and the propositions which we were taught to repeat in church, when once realized, was too glaring. One belonged to the world of realities, and the other to the world of dreams. I was not discovering that my creed was false, but that I had never really believed it. I had unconsciously imbibed the current phraseology, but the formulae belonged to the superficial stratum of my thought instead of to the fundamental convictions."[1]

But perhaps some will protest that Scripture itself frowns upon doubting. It depends. God does frown on dishonest doubt, or the doubt of rationali-

RICHARD K. CURTIS *graduated from Northern Baptist ...eological Seminary in 1950 and received a Ph.D. degree ...m Purdue University in 1954. He was pastor of the Rus-...ville Baptist Church in Indiana before becoming asso-...te professor of speech and homiletics at Bethel College ...d Seminary. He is also interim-pastor of Park Baptist ...urch, St. Paul, Minnesota.*

[1]Maitland, F. W., *The Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen,* (New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1906). Used by permission.

zation, which seeks to set aside God and his injunctions in order "to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." But nowhere in Scripture does he condemn honest doubt, ranging from the academic, intellectual inquiry prompted by the arraigning of evidence contrary to accepted beliefs, down to the depths of despair where the soul cries out in desperation that there can be no God.

Honest Doubt

Surely all of us have shared in the experience of the father of the boy with the dumb spirit who, when queried as to his faith by the great physician, cried out, "Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief." "Lord," he appears to be saying, "I have a measure of belief, but doubts keep creeping in. Dispel these, and continue to prove yourself as other doubts arise."

And this is what God did, you remember, with Gideon, the classic doubter of the Old Testament. Accosted by the angel, he doubted that God was with him or with Israel. After all, how could God be with them in the midst of such terrible adversity, driven with their backs to the mountains by the pursuing enemy? Again, where was the God who performed the miracles of his forefathers during the wilderness journey? Adversity and monotony—surely no place for God there. And God proved himself. Then came the doubt of difficulty, facing scores of thousands of well-equipped soldiers, with a handful of 300 armed with pitchers, lamps and trumpets. An obviously impossible situation—how could God be in it? But God was in it, in spite of, or dare we say because of Gideon's doubts and subsequent doubting of those doubts.

Ever since Gideon, God's "hall of fame" has been occupied with great saints who in the midst of adversity, monotony, or difficulty were forced to doubt. Like Gideon, they were honest enough to take their doubt to God and cry for him to prove himself. Even a casual perusal of the biographies and diaries of men like Carey, Judson, Livingstone, Wesley, and others bears out the fact that every great faith has been hammered out on the hard anvil of doubt.

Belief Means Action

At this point we may well ask what we mean by faith, or belief. When we read in W. K. Clifford's essay, *The Duty of Inquiry*, "Nor is that truly a belief at all which has not some influence upon the actions of him who holds it," we are but restating the admonition of our Lord, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven."

We believe then in the measure that we do. To the extent that our lives reflect our belief in heaven, in hell, in Christ, in the angels, in the Bible, etc., to that extent do we believe. Perhaps it is at this point that the plaintive cry of the sick boy's father to the Christ becomes our common prayer. Perhaps, instead of praying that we shall experience no doubt, only certainty, we need to pray for faith to live in the arena of human impossibilities, where, like the great saints of ev age, our faith will be tried and tested in the cr ble of human experience.

If Clifford insists that the great wrong we petrate against our fellow man is that we m ourselves credulous, that we jump to conclusi unwarranted by the evidence, then perhaps thi far worse a sin against the God who endowed with minds capable of reasoning. To refuse question, to query, to doubt in the face of confl ing evidence, and to take our doubts to Him is abundantly able to prove himself, is not this tellectual dishonesty of the worst sort? For, Clifford insists, "where it is presumption to do and to investigate, there it is worse than presu tion to believe."

As a matter of fact, it is when we refuse to q tion that we stifle the learning process. By one or another, often because we parents are just busy, we stifle the questions of our youngsters have reached their peak of learning at age fou five, when they have learned to substitute symb for objects, and are constantly seeking the na of new objects, as well as the relationships am them. For instance, "Daddy, who is that in picture? Jesus? Daddy, is Jesus God? How can be up in heaven if he's in my heart?" Usually the time the youngster is twelve or thirteen, he been sufficiently squelched so he is asking no m really significant questions. Perhaps here has b a major reason why so many of our national ma zines are written for adults with twelve year minds—people who "died back of the bra prematurely.

Test and Try

But perhaps some insist that we cannot "pro the doctrines of religion as we can the data science. Love defies test tube measurement. Agre But is empirical, quantitative measurement only evidence we can accept? Fortunately, th are many other types of evidence, some stron than others. When we accept the teachings of forebears, we have accepted the evidence of auth ity. And while such authority may be sufficient childhood, it is no substitute for the meaning direct experience that the Lordship of Christ quires of every believer. It is then that we can serve cause and effect in action. It is then that can watch the change take place in the conver sinner, and reason back to a sufficient cause. I then that we can test and try, question and c roborate not only our relationship with God, also the body of teachings that we inherit as more or less meaningful expression of our faith. while God remains changeless, it is only abs naivety that demands of our human concepts fallibility and immutability.

The road from credulity to faith is a hard o For questioning where others are "certain," a doubting where the tide of public opinion is ov whelming, and despairing when life's very soul hard pressed, is anything but an easy road. then, neither was the road to Calvary.

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Prayer Can Be Wrong

By Orva Lee Ice

OFTEN we hear enthusiastic testimonies about the many blessings of answered prayer; the blessings of *unanswered* prayer may be quite as thrilling. He who says that there is no such thing as unanswered prayer is often more pious than honest, more credulous than wise. For to say that God sometimes says "No" is affirming not only that many of our requests remain ungranted, but also that prayers unanswered may be a form of God's mercy.

So many of our prayers remain unheeded that we do have cause to wonder if praying is not a waste of time. The problem becomes so perplexing and disheartening that many persons give up praying altogether. And such people must not be condemned as impious, for many of them are humbly and honestly troubled.

I have stood by and listened to a godly man plead with God to spare the life of his twenty-year-old son, pouring out honest words with tremendous concern. I have heard him confess his sins, cry out in humility his unworthiness, make vows to God, promise cleaner living. He wrestled and pled as one father to another. And yet while he was praying, death carried his son away. Then I saw him sitting there in stony silence, his fixed eyes red with weeping. Perplexed and confused he turned to me with the shock of unanswered prayer and whispered, "Pastor, why?"

Nothing can be right about our faith if it is not honest. In all candor before God we must recognize that the eternal Father does not always grant the requests of his children any more than do earthly parents in dealing lovingly and wisely with their children.

But then, what? The small petitions we may forego, take them or leave them, but when it comes to deep unmerited suffering, untimely death and mass affliction, how then? Why are earnest supplications denied and such obvious needs ignored?

ORVA LEE ICE *became minister of Calvary Baptist Church at Minneapolis in 1945 after a thirteen-year pastorate at Pittsburgh, where he had a wide audience through weekly radio programs. He is a graduate of Colgate Rochester Divinity School and author of several books.*

Man is created as a praying being. If God is a responsible creator, prayer cannot be some bizarre prank played on hapless souls by a celestial trickster who only mocks man's predicament, nor can the Eternal be some heavenly huckster whose favors may be had by the highest bidder or the most importunate. Why then are so many petitions denied?

No one can arrogantly and presumptuously set down flat answers. It is not irreverent but quite honest to recognize that the Bible is no record of completely victorious saints who always obtained their desires at heaven's hand. It is not a monotonous account of pious lobbyists who freely enter the labyrinths of heaven getting their petitions passed and returning laden with celestial grants, but it is a book also of unanswered prayer. If in our reading of the Scriptures we turned page after page and found the characters there portrayed as continuously receiving the desires of their hearts, we would be driven to conclude that the book was unrealistic, something apart from our own living experience. However, we do find that requests of some of the greatest and most saintly people were ignored.

Examples in the Bible

Take Moses as an example. The Bible records how he was God's agent in the performing of miracles before Pharaoh, at the Red Sea and along the pilgrims' journey. He carried heaven's key in his pocket and yet he cries, "I besought the Lord saying, 'O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand. I pray thee let me go over and see the good land beyond Jordan.' But the Lord was wroth with me and would not hear me and said, 'Let it suffice thee; speak no more of this matter to me. Get thee up on Mount Pisgah and behold it with thine eyes, for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.' "

There is Paul who was never disobedient to the heavenly vision, who did all things with a good conscience before God, who gave his life a living sacrifice and died a martyr to his faith. He besought the Lord with tears that his thorn of torture might be removed, but it was kept in his flesh. Many have been the cries of the righteous and God has not delivered them out of a their troubles. Many have cried, this cup pass from me," many asked, "My God, why?" and hav ceived the same answers.

One possibility is that prayers be wrong. In the first place, pr can be wrong when it endeavor substitute man's wisdom for God can be wrong at the point whe presumes to impose man's will on will. It is not a simple thing to wisely. It is difficult to know wha should have. More than we nee obtain our requests from God, we to get from God wisdom in our as The mature mind recognizes that is a great difference between our w and our needs.

Thanking God

Piety is no assurance of wisdom ligious fervor no test of intellige "Ye ask and receive not becaus ask amiss." One prayer that migh ways seem appropriate would be t press thanksgiving that we do have wisdom of God upon which we may pend. To thank him that we discovered what a blessing unansw prayer can be.

> We, ignorant of ourselves,
> Beg often to our own harms, w
> the wise powers
> Deny us for our good; so we
> profit
> By losing of our prayers.

Secondly, prayer can be wrong w our strong desires so possess and ganize us that we do get what we w Prayer is not only what we say our lips. Often words never portra man's real prayer at all. What he or recites is only a routine of pr phrases. His real prayer is what h organizing his life to secure. S prayers are more often answered t the holy speeches we deliver. De can galvanize the whole personalit obtain its end. Whatever else one intone in church or closet, here is true prayer. Man may spend a wh lifetime really securing the answe his prayer—and finally be damned

Often we emphasize that to wor to pray; that God helps those who h themselves. There is no less truth this when we say that we must careful of how we work, of the me

e. So intense do we become in the ing of worthy goals that we use rthy means to reach them.

omas Post was on a fishing trip he was called by telephone and med that his son was ill with diph-a. He asked if Doctor Francis had called. He was told that they had d the doctor but that he was visit-elatives over the week end. He promised to come at once. Tom mmediately. He was driving along ack road when his car stalled. He nable to get it started. In despera-he began to walk to the nearest , praying with every step that one might come along and pick up. He began to run. When he to the main road he found a line station there. A car was stand-near the pump. In his frenzy he ng into the automobile and drove ly toward home. He even thanked for supplying him a way; and n he arrived and found the lad still he thanked God. His son was gerously ill. An hour passed and doctor did not come. The son died. en the doctor came he told Tom sorry he was, that had he been in he could have saved the boy from king to death by a tracheotomy. n he told him the reason for his y—someone had stolen his car at gasoline station.

ven when we work to answer our vers we fail because of our lack of dom. How much more imperative not only that God's will be done, also that we do God's will.

Means and Ends

n the third place, prayer can be ng when it endeavors to enlist l's support for our own ideas. We y be importuning God to bless our n enterprise when it may be un-rthy. The means we use may be rthy but the end quite unworthy. may piously seek to make God a ty to our partisanship, asking him ndorse and prosper our contention. do many religious people pray for final assize to exonerate their posi-n, prove them quite properly right l bring consternation and even nnation upon their opponents. nen the well-meaning clergymen d Mr. Lincoln that they were pray-that God would be on their side he swered with consummate under-nding. He knew that Confederate aplains were praying the same re-est of God, for their side. He assured e ministers that the better part would to pray that we were on God's side. It might be quite proper to return nks to the Almighty that his grace d power is not available to everyone o prays. In *Green Pastures,* Gabriel th notebook in hand informs the awd" that in one day he had hurled t of heaven a total of 18,960 thunder-lts. What a shambles the earth would if God hurled blockbusters out of windows of heaven at the behest of ry cult and sect. When the sons of nder prayed that fire might be ught down from heaven upon a city that would not receive them, their request was ignored. They did not realize what a malevolent spirit they had; certainly it was not the spirit of God.

Prayer can be wrong when it is used as a medium of informing God, when we try to condition the Eternal's mind. We imagine we can tell him about things in a manner of special pleading. We inform him about things not as they are, but as we think them or wish them to be. Let us not be deceived—we cannot deceive God. Prayer is a soul discipline wherein we endeavor to make God's will our own. It is not a seizure of supernal power to be used to further our own bias.

In another sense, prayer can be wrong when it is made a substitute for action. We are admonished to pray for our daily bread but no morning manna is sent. The answer is given in the seed, the soil, the sun and rain. After that God lets "George" do it. George is a good usage; "ge" is the stem for geology and means earth; "ergo" means to work, so that George means worker of the earth. His hands must be upon the plow. God is no encourager of indolence. Prayers are practiced as well as spoken.

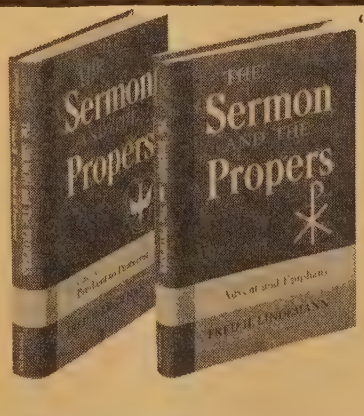
Reprimand is often given for praying without action. Joshua, after the inglorious defeat at Ai, rent his clothes and fell upon the earth utterly undone and prayed God to give him victory. The answer he received was that he get up and go in and possess the land which the Lord had given him. He was sprawled on his face when he should have been standing on his feet.

Lastly, but not finally, prayer can be wrong when it pleads that two and two may not add up to four; when it hopes by clinging heaven by the hems to escape the harvest of what has willfully or thoughtlessly been sown. So many beg the Lord that they may not have to suffer the consequences of their own sins; that they may not be caught; and that if they are apprehended they may escape the penalty of their own evildoing. The law of seedtime and harvest still obtains the world around in bad and good living. If you add up indulgence, greed, envy and evildoing you will not get happiness however long your prayers may be. Even your ardent supplication will not bring figs from thorns nor grapes from thistles. On the other side of the coin, if you put together goodness, virtue and righteousness your prayers may be those of thankfulness for the blessings and peace of mind you harvest.

What shall we say then? The conclusion of the whole matter is this, that prayer is not to be depended upon, but *God is.* No prayer can be right that makes God wrong.

In summation, prayer can be wrong when it tries to enlist God's support rather than his guidance. Prayer can be wrong when it attempts to make God a party to our opinions and importunes him to take sides with us in our quarrels. Prayer can be wrong when it seeks to encourage our laziness and be a substitute for work. It can be wrong when it asks heaven to hide us from the consequences of our sin.

Prayer can be right when it approaches God in humility and openness, "Not my will but Thine be done." Prayer can be right when it follows the pattern given in the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." It can be right when it confesses sin rather than asking to be saved from its consequence, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." It can be right when it prays, "Give us this day our daily bread," and then works as if the getting of it wholly depended upon us. Prayer can be right—becomes right—when it recognizes that "thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen."



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Book Reviews

MAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS. *By Howard Clark Kee. Westminster Press. $1.00.*

UNDER the editorship of Robert McAffee Brown the Westminster Press is issuing a series of small books in a "Layman's Theological Library." The latest volume to be published is *Making Ethical Decisions* by Howard Clark Kee.

In this very readable book Dr. Kee, Associate Professor of New Testament at Drew Theological Seminary, discusses the bases upon which ethical decisions are to be made. Rejecting an ethics of law, Dr. Kee affirms that ethical decisions of Christians grow out of relationship to God who has come to man in Jesus Christ.

An especially rewarding chapter is his discussion of the meaning of fellowship in the Christian community. The impact of the redemptive community is significantly discussed in contrast to the general mood of conformity so current in American life.

While Dr. Kee does not discuss "Orders of Creation" as such, he assumes throughout the book certain orders of creation to which men must respond in making ethical decisions, family, vocation, and government. His concluding chapter on forgiveness is very helpful.

This small book (96 pp.) can be used most effectively in adult and youth Church school and discussion groups. It does not "water down" but yet presents theological ideas in terms which searching laymen can grasp.—*Alva I. Cox, Jr., National Council of Churches, New York, N. Y.*

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS COMES OF AGE. *Harper. $4.00.*

THE success story of Alcoholics Anonymous is one of the most heart-warming and reassuring stories of our generation. Though the work of this organization—which prefers to call itself a fellowship—is well known, this book takes us behind the scenes into the early groping beginnings, the devoted perseverance, the discovery of basic insights, the formation of principles, the wrestling with temptations, and the expanding success of the work. At the twentieth anniversary convention held at St. Louis in July of 1955 all these facts of a remarkable history were gratefully commemorated and A. A. declared itself to have come of age.

The methods and principles of A. A., in particular the Twelve Steps, are no longer news. It was news to me however to see that perhaps the most basic and needed insight of the movement was arrived at only after repe early failures and to notice again how nearly identical this insigh with a central strain of historic C tian teaching about sin, forgive and reconciliation. To quote, Silkworth taught us how to till black soil of hopelessness out of w every single spiritual awakening in fellowship has since flowed . . . A six months of failure on my pa dry up any drunks, he again remi me of Professor William Jones' ob vation that truly transforming spiri experiences are nearly always fou on calamity and collapse." This is phasized again later, "You've go deflate these people first. So give t the medical business, and give i them hard (their obsession, phys sensitivity, etc.) . . . coming from other alcoholic, one alcoholic tal to another, maybe that will crack t tough egos deep down." This h need of rugged candor and hu confession was solidly confirmed experience and became permane enshrined in the first step, "We mitted that we were powerless alcohol . . ." From this the second finds its logical place, "[We] cam believe that a power greater than selves could restore us to sanity." J Wesley's thoughtful observation co to mind, saying that he found he m preach law and judgment before could preach grace and love.

Other soundly realistic (and Ch tian) insights permeate the think and operational guideposts of A. The need of giving, sharing, discipl self-denial, "carrying the messa etc., is insistently made clear and luminated in the setting of the a holic's experience. There is no r here for passive adherence. Chapte on "Religion Looks at Alcoho Anonymous," summarizes many of insights of a specifically religious ture which the movement seeks to low. The emphasis is sound a searching, not merely pleasing soothing as many of us fear is of true conventionally and in churches. This, for example, is s about seeking "benefits from Go "Of course he [the alcoholic] is c cerned about himself. He can't help He ought to be. He must be, if he ever to be made useful to other peo But later on he must also grow up a stop just *using* God and begin to God to *use him*. Stop asking God to what he wants, and begin to try to fi out what it is that God wants . . . R prayer is not telling God what want. It is putting ourselves at disposal so that He can tell us what wants."

This is the remarkable story o

t movement which now, incidenly, claims more than 7000 local A. A. ips and over 200,000 members tered far and wide throughout the ld. For an adequate appreciation must take a steady look at its his- as recorded in this book.—*William ssen, First Presbyterian, Normal, nois.*

UNSELING FOR CHURCH VOCATIONS. *By Samuel Southard. Broadman Press. $2.00.*

HE title describes very well the purpose of this book. If the future dership of the church is to remain capable hands, sympathetic and unstanding counsel to possible canates must be forthcoming from tors.

Professor Southard supports his case h the rather weighty evidence of a ort on a survey of 1,500 theological dents conducted by the Southern ptist Seminary. Specific questions re asked these students about the p which they received from their stors as they worked their way ough to a decision for a church voion. The various stages in the deopment of such a decision are dealt th and outlined. A pastor should allenge as well as encourage the canlate. Mr. Southard shows on the ner hand how important it is to help e individual examine his motives to ake sure that they are healthy and ature. A pastor should take advange of the tremendous strides made the whole field of counseling and apply them to this area of the church's task.

The author's experience appears to be in the freer traditions of church order and for that reason some of these illustrations will not appeal to those who come out of a tradition where these things are more systematically treated. While this book does not attempt to be an exhaustive study, it is very helpful and suggestive.—*Robert B. Hayward, Fourth Presbyterian, Chicago, Illinois.*

THROUGH GATES OF SPLENDOR. *By Elisabeth Elliot. Harper. $3.75.*

IN JANUARY 1956, five young missionaries were martyred by members of the Auca tribe, totally unevangelized stone-age Indians of the Ecuadorian jungle. *Through Gates of Splendor* is the account in full detail of the personalities, places and events which made headlines throughout the world for many weeks. But the real core in the book is not the telling of spectacular facts leading to the brutal martyrdom; rather it is a story of Christian dedication. Elisabeth Elliot, wife of one of the martyrs, weaves from

Pulpit Calendar

Mar. 30-April 5—Holy Week.
Apr. 3—Maundy Thursday.
Apr. 4—Good Friday.
Apr. 6—Easter.
Apr. 13 — 1st Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 20 — National Christian College Day.
Apr. 27 — 3rd Sunday after Easter.
May 2—May Fellowship Day.
May 4 — 4th Sunday after Easter.
May 4-11 — National Family Week.
May 11—Festival of the Christian Home (Mother's Day).
May 15—Ascension Day.
May 18—Sunday after Ascension Day.
May 25 — Whitsunday (Pentecost).
May 30—Memorial Day.
June 1—Trinity Sunday.
June 8—Children's Sunday.
June 15—Father's Day.
June 22—4th Sunday after Pentecost.
June 29—Independence Sunday.
Nature Sunday.

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THEY KNEW JESUS. *By George Cornell. William Morrow & $3.75.*

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MEETING LIFE ON HIGHER LEVELS. *Hunter Beckelhymer. Abingd $1.75.*

THOUSANDS of us have liste to college chapel talks. A cap audience we were. A captivated a ence, most often, we were not. We tened reluctantly or with ill-concea antagonistic curiosity, or at times, w an air of loyal forbearance. Thi rather rocky soil for a word to t root in and blossom. But at a gi time and place, a word did just tha

The time was circa Pearl Harb The place was Park College Cha The author of this book was one of reluctant, curious, et al. The word Paul's: ". . . forgetting those thi which are behind, . . . I press on . In this word was seen a plan and a source for courageous Christian livi This book is the sharing of that w "come alive" in a young man's m istry.

Hunter Beckelhymer sets that w in bold, fresh, often lilting, always p vocative prose. His six chapters spe directly to the individual, but do leave a man only "self"-conscio They lead him to a profound view God-in-Christ. This is accomplish without the shock of doom and glo and without the spiritually-irredee able coupon of "pie-in-the-sky."

Expository in outline, topical treatment, the author brings an am ingly well-read mind to his writi The illustrations are both pungent a poignant, apropos as to context, ac rate as to detail. The message s behind the words is as changeless

th as the words themselves are cur-
t and impeccably turned to encour-
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t-hearted, and to guide the con-
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l may well unite the serious and the
ual reader to muse: "I wish I'd said
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k will give new eyes to your exe-
is and a more Biblical orientation
your view of life.—*Harold L. Ogden, estminster Presbyterian, Albany, Y.*

TREASURY OF STORY-SERMONS FOR CHILDREN. *Edited by Charles L. Wallis. Harper. $3.95.*

ME WORSHIP. *By Guin Ream. Bethany. $2.00.*

WORSHIP STORIES FOR CHILDREN. *By Theodore W. Schroeder. Concordia. $1.75.*

THE selection and use of the story sermon in worship for boys and ls depends upon the leader's belief d purpose. His concern may be "to ake Biblical theology relevant and eaningful in the experience of the rner now." It may be "to leave the ildren with questions to think about." may be "to apply moral principles." The reader of the three books listed ove will find their usefulness transable in so far as these several purses coincide with his own. All three tents are included in *"A Treasury of ory-Sermons."* One leader may not e the entire two years' supply but ch leader will be able to incorporate ore than several.

Some of the stories are unforgettable. owever, some unforgettable stories ve been omitted. A treasury should clude some of the Stocking tales and me of the sermons for children by the imitable Dr. Calkins. Indeed Dr. alkins' sermon, "Consider the Lilies," en though abridged, would be supeor to the one adapted by another riter, which is included in the *Treasy.*

Pastor Schroeder's *49 Worship Stors for Children* will be useful to those ho embrace the theological beliefs of e Missouri Lutherans. Those who do ot hold this particular theology will ffer with Dr. Schroeder in his docine of the sinfulness of children, and ove all to his reducing of sin's great unterpart—redemption—to bare Bibcal statements.

Come Worship, by Guin Ream is a arm sincere little book permeated by e author's own insights and spirit. mong certain groups of teen-agers iss Ream's services are doubtless elpful and inspiring. But they do not robe deeply enough to capture the terest of the more sophisticated and nalytical youth of today.

All three books are recommended for xamination, for all three have value to aders of worship depending upon the ader's purpose and upon the situation which he ministers to boys and girls. *-Lucille M. Worster, Brookline, Massachusetts.*

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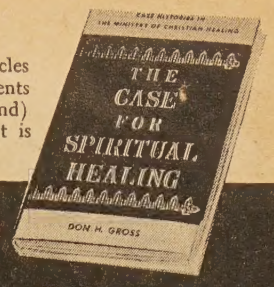

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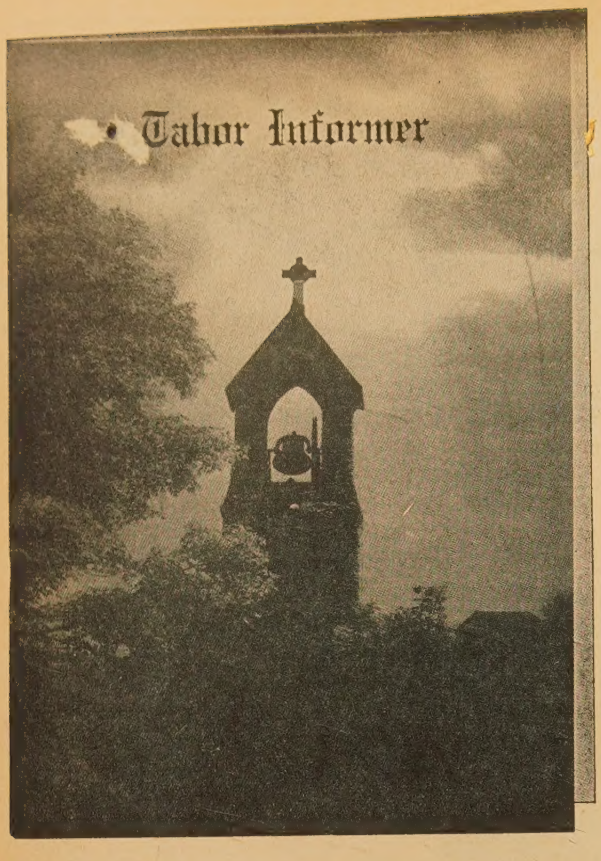

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